

DRIFTINGS
from MID-OCEAN

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

PZ3
Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf P834D

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Stories by Miss Porter.

CHARITY, SWEET CHARITY.

FOUNDATIONS ; or, Castles in the Air.

IN THE MIST.

OUR SAINTS.

A SONG AND A SIGH.

THE STORY OF A FLOWER.

SUMMER DRIFTWOOD FOR THE WINTER
FIRE.

UPLANDS AND LOWLANDS.

THE WINTER FIRE.

YEARS THAT ARE TOLD.

The 10 volumes in a box, \$10.00 ; or sold separately at
\$1.00 each.

HONORIA. \$1.00.

A MODERN ST. CHRISTOPHER. \$1.25.

DRIFTINGS FROM MID-OCEAN. \$1.25.

Anson D. F. Randolph & Company,

38 West Twenty-third St., New York.

DRIFTINGS FROM
MID-OCEAN.

CHARACTER STUDIES.

A SEQUEL TO

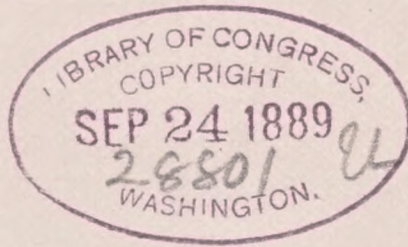
SUMMER DRIFT-WOOD

AND

THE WINTER FIRE.

BY

ROSE PORTER.



NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,

38 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET.

PZ3

P834

Dr

COPYRIGHT, 1889, BY
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY.

E. O. JENKINS' SONS, PRINTERS,
20 N. WILLIAM STREET
NEW YORK.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

	PAGE
I.—THE PAST AND THE PRESENT, . . .	5
II.—THE SECRET OF PERPETUAL YOUTH, .	10
III.—DRIFT-WOOD TREASURES, . . .	14
IV.—ALICE FRASER AND MADIE LEIGH, .	25
V.—CHARACTER STUDIES AND A QUESTION, .	34
VI.—SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT, . . .	43
VII.—A RETROSPECT.—LINKS WITH HEAVEN,	52
VIII.—HAPPINESS A GOD-GIVEN PRIVILEGE, .	59
IX.—GOD'S UPLANDS, ...	69
X.—SHADOW PICTURES, ...	74
XI.—MIRACLES.—ARGUMENT FAILS, ACTION CONQUERS, ...	87
XII.—GOLDEN HOURS, ...	92
XIII.—VENICE AND A LOVE STORY, . . .	97
XIV.—HERBERT GRIFFIN'S TRIAL, . . .	106
XV.—A CLOUD IN THE SKY, ...	113

	PAGE
XVI.—REVELATIONS OF INDIVIDUALITY, .	121
XVII.—THE INFLUENCE OF NATURE, .	127
XVIII.—A TALK OF THE HEREAFTER, .	132
XIX.—SABBATH TWILIGHT, . . .	140
XX.—LIFE BEFORE—DEATH BEHIND, .	147
XXI.—THE “STILL, SMALL VOICE,” .	150
XXII.—A KEY TO LIFE’S MYSTERY, .	153
XXIII.—FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN, .	157
XXIV.—HUMANIZED RELIGION, . .	160
XXV.—STEPHEN FORBES.—A CHAPTER OF DARKNESS, ...	166
XXVI.—A LULL BEFORE THE STORM, .	178
XXVII.—PROVIDENCE SOLVES AN ENIGMA, .	186
XXVIII.—MILICENT WARD.—PARTINGS, .	191
XXIX.—GOOD AND EVIL, ...	198
XXX.—FAREWELL TO ROME, AND WEL- COME TO ENGLAND, ...	207

PART II.

I.—MEMORY’S STORE-HOUSE, . . .	211
II.—A CLEAR SHINING AFTER RAIN, .	219
III.—MADIE—A CHANGELING, . . .	231
IV.—HARRY GRIFFIN’S WARFARE, . .	238

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
V.—LIGHT AND SHADE, ...	248
VI.—RALPH STERLING.—PAUSE-PLACES, ...	252
VII.—FAITH ITS OWN EVIDENCE, ...	256
VIII.—THE MOON OF ROSES AND A LETTER, ...	260
IX.—GOD <i>Is</i> LOVE, ...	268
X.—A DEAD PAST,.	270
XI.—FRANK HOWLAND.—CREEDS,.	277
XII.—TOO LATE, ...	283
XIII.—THE “OUR FATHER” TITLE,.	291
XIV.—THE NAME OF MR. HOWLAND’S GOD, ...	301
XV.—STEPPING WESTWARD, ...	305
XVI.—WAITING—AND THEN—“HOME! WHERE LIVES JOY,”	307

PART I.

"LOOKING back along life's trodden way,
Gleams and greenness linger on the track :
Distance melts and mellows all to-day,
Looking back.

"Rose and purple and a silvery-gray,
Is that cloud the cloud we called so black ?
Evening harmonizes all to-day,
Looking back.

³⁶ Foolish feet so prone to halt or stray,
Foolish heart so restive on the rack !
Yesterday we sighed, but not to-day,
Looking back."

DRIFTINGS FROM MID-OCEAN.

I.

YEARS ago, to please my grandfather, I kept my "Summer Driftwood" diary. Later, still in accordance with his wish, I penned the "Winter-Fire" journal, and when I came to the last page of each I said: "I will never keep another such record of my life's story: as for the history traced every passing hour on the tablets of the heart, why, that must go on till mortal life goes out." Nevertheless, I decide to change my mind; for yesterday, when I was looking over my father's papers, I found a letter written years ago by grandpapa, and it contains the request that I should tell what my experiences of sorrow and joy, success and failure, mean when viewed from the half-way place we call life's meridian. Grandpapa also bids me tell wherein my spir-

itual vision has widened and wherein narrowed; and what influence has been exerted on my mind and heart by the modern impatience of dogma and the interpretations of old faiths by the new light of what many earnest people regard as an increase of knowledge, broader belief, and more expansive love. As I ponder these questions I find them environed with issues that I can only meet by telling you of my life as it is closely linked with other lives: for my individual experience is a mere feeble heart-beat, but thus united it will become allied to the warm living throb of the great pulsing heart of humanity, just as a unit helps to count a hundred or a rain-drop to form a shower. The knowledge that companionship is vitality, while isolation is death, decides me to begin this record now, when I stand as it were on the threshold of a new life. For next week I expect to join a party of friends, with whom I plan spending several years in foreign travel. I will briefly explain how it happens that I am thus leaving home, and then pass on to the day of sailing.

You will remember my grandfather's death, and how soon after it father and I left the city. We came to this dear old homestead, which my father inherited, when Aunt Stella's earthly pilgrimage ended. From that time on, till three months ago, the days came and went, one much like the other, and unmarked by any startling event. But then there dawned a morning which heralded the day of days for me:—it left me orphaned!—It was all very sudden. Father was strong and well when the sun rose,—cold and still when it set,—for at noontime "God's finger touched him and he slept," while Heaven's Gate opened and his soul entered "within the veil," and Christ revealed that

"Death is not to His followers
So much even as the lifting of a latch;
Only a step into the open air,
Out of a tent already luminous
With light that shines through the transparent
walls!"

I will not dwell on details, the facts are sufficient, and they are encompassed by won-

derful manifestations of the Heavenly Father's tender pity, and of Christ's nearness. I do not mean that I realized the comfort of that pity and nearness just at first.—No—I had to sit in the pain and wait for God to bind up. It was while I was thus waiting that the peace came, for it was then that I caught a gleam of the precious truth that my very grief gave me a right to come close to Christ, for by it part of the woe this world bears for sin was laid on me, and I must lift it *with* Christ. He does not bear the Cross alone—neither does He ask His followers to bear it alone.—He is touched by our feelings—He knew a moment of the vanishing parent, and by the cry—"Why hast Thou forsaken me?" surely I know, He knows the agony of separation. . . . Later, even in the midst of my desolation, I found how much is still left me that is worth living for if I will only accept it in the way the Lord provides. Thus it is that this great sorrow of my mid-life has come freighted with meanings my youth-time grief only faintly discerned, and it

explains why much that gave me sweet and soothing solace then, is now empty of consolation ; and yet, the comfort I now find is the fruit of the seed sown in the furrows of that early sorrow, for the prayers planted then are ripened blessings now ! ——

II.

I SAID I would straightway begin my narrative, and yet I linger over these preface pages, partly because there is something so solemn in a commencement, for it must remind of an end, and partly because I am absorbed to-day, wondering why my father so long withheld grandpapa's request for this after-math journal. I suppose one reason is, that father could not realize that I had turned the corner that leads from youth to maturity. Thirty-five last June! No more youngness for me as the world counts, but to him to the very end I was "little Annie"; and he was the father my childhood knew. I turned to him with the same confidence and rest I then felt in his superior strength and wisdom; he continued the "providence of home." This unchangeableness in the relation of parent and child is so beautiful and tender, and it so

helps toward the understanding of God's Fatherhood. As I think of the future, and the service for Christ with which I would fain fill it, my desire seems centred on the longing to help others toward this blessed knowledge of God as a *Father*.

To return to the subject of age. What a strange thing it is, and what an odd way it has of receding as we approach it; it is odd, too, that age is something we think less about as we begin to grow old!—But that is as it should be—for what is age after all? To my mind the early masters in Art bring out its real meaning with greater force than any of the many who have striven to portray it. I have always been glad “they were wise and pious enough to grasp the idea of God as the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last”; and while this led them to represent the Almighty as the “Ancient of Days,” it also led them to encircle Him with clouds of day-dawn upheld by cherubs with faces innocent as smiles and sweet as the flowers of spring. This portrayal by Art of God, as “the young-

est and the oldest of Beings," is surely an echo of the revelation He grants His children of the perpetual youth of those who wait on Him, and renew their strength and mount up with wings as eagles: "They who run and are not weary, who walk and are not faint." These words so tell of continuing growth, new and fresh spiritual life; and this does not cease even when the physical life begins to show signs of waste and decay. It contains, too, the assurance of immortality, and that illumines daily life, its simple duties and common affections, with sacredness and glory. If I could constantly remember this, how it would help aspiration and increase earnestness in prayer and patient waiting for God's will in answer. I suppose if I truly possessed that patience I would be always cheerful and glad with the joy St. Paul linked with sorrow. By which I infer he means that the trials and discipline of the present are nothing when compared to the abiding joy of the Hereafter. This thought makes me so long to use trials in a way that will promote that joy; and the

knowledge that they can be thus used so helps over rough places, and using the power one has is such a sure way of gaining greater power. It is a duty also, for

“Those who wait
To meet the Bridegroom, they must trim their lamps,
And seek the oil from Heaven; and those who own
Him Master, and from Him their gifts receive,
Must bring their talents—two, or five, or one—
With usury to their Lord.”

III.

A CIRCUMSTANCE occurred last evening which, in the presence of grand-papa's request, so assumes the form of a metaphor illustrating the significance of the events I propose to record, I pause to note it. It had been a gray day, with frequent brisk showers; toward sunset I stood on the western balcony watching to see if the clouds would lift, and it was then my neighbor's child came running up the garden walk, bringing what at the first glance appeared to be simply a basketful of chips, but on investigation I found the basket was laden with drift-wood from mid-ocean, and hence rich in the eloquent, pitiful language by which such mementoes tell the tragedies of storm and wreck.

“Mother sent them, Miss Annie, and when you light a fire they will show you beautiful colors.”

This was the little lad's explanation of the gift, but words were not needed to explain their message to me ; and as I lifted the wave and weather beaten fragments from the basket, each one seemed laden with a sigh. All in a moment, too, my soul's eye, that spiritual organ which knows no limit of time or distance, was traversing the eastern boundary of the Atlantic States, while I wondered where the in-rolling waves had deposited these special waifs of wreck which I held in my hand, and what wild storm had freed them from the prison of the deep, and given them to the billows of the upper waters to scatter in a thousand different places from Maine to Florida. I wondered, too, whether they had been dashed in angry fury against rocky cliffs and out-jutting reefs, or had they floated landward on white foamy surf-line waves that creep far up the low-lying land of sandy shores?

These are but a few of the many questions suggested by those bits of broken spars, shattered masts, and battered sea-furniture. And

the fact that their story was commonplace served to give them an added pathos. I could not keep tears from my eyes as I remembered how silently and swiftly the gallant life-freighted vessels, of which they had once made a part, had vanished from the path of ocean travel ; so completely too, in many cases only a brief hour after the awesome tragedy, the keenest eye of the keenest mariner could no more tell the place where the waves opened to engulf them, than he could tell where yesterday's raindrop stirred a ripple in the glassy surface of the calm water he sails to-day. And yet sailors maintain that the sea never ceases to moan ; that sighs underlie the gay dancing waves—just as tears are the background of rainbows. This is, of course, a mere superstition, nevertheless it appeals tenderly to me, for the sea is Jack's tomb, and that means my heart's grave. For my life has never been the same since he sailed over the blue smiling waves in the glad light of early morning, not to return when twilight settled in gray gloom on sea and shore.

I say life has never been the same, for sorrow is like a circle; when once we enter it, truly it becomes a ring encompassing all our after-years. Somehow it seems able also to encircle the past, and thus to make it, too, a part of our present and future. It is this which keeps an underlying unity and harmony in life, even when circumstances and surroundings are most eventful and full of change, for we know

“By one pervading Spirit . . .
All things are controlled.”

This brings me back to the thought of yesterday, that to a Christian every sorrow has a joy of its own linked with it—joy being something very unlike happiness.—Thus no life earnest in purpose can fail to find gleams of light blended in with shades of darkness. This truth never seems so real and dear as when separation from our best loved ones comes like a wide sea dividing the mortal from the immortal, the seen from the unseen; for then God’s love, of which Christ is the Revealer, interprets for us, that had there

been no such rending apart, no death here, there could be no reunion and life *There*; for our Lord Christ only became the Resurrection Life by passing through the mystery and darkness of the tomb, thus making for all believers "the grave, Heaven's Golden Gate."

I have wandered from the treasures of driftwood which I left lying on the library-table while I returned to the balcony to watch Bennie Blake run home, and to take another skyward look. Five minutes compassed the time of my absence, but when the sun is nearing the western horizon five minutes can work a marvel of change and beauty. Yet I was unprepared for the scene that greeted my return, for so swiftly had the curtain of cloud and mist furled up and rolled away, I could but wonder—where had it gone? Not a vestige was left save a billowy mass of fleecy vapor, and that was no longer gray and misty, for lights were playing over it in sweet confusion of subdued ruby and rosy flashes with

tints of softened violet, pale yellow and burnished gold, which were as unlike the aforetime dull-hued storm clouds as the face of a happy maiden is unlike the countenance of a woman of sorrowful soul. But despite this difference, full well I know all that glory and brightness was caught from the sunbeams shining on the clouds! This fact suggested a metaphor unlike the one hinted by the driftwood, but it was none the less helpful in interpreting the meaning of mortal existence. As for the tree-tops that hour, they were like crowns of gold as they swayed gently to and fro, keeping time with the music of the wind which at sundown was hardly more than a breeze. The birds, too, were singing after the rain, the low tender chants of their even-song, and that held still another emblem for me to unravel, and then weave into this record. And yet the birds' song did not suggest any new thought, it only emphasized a familiar truth, but alas! one I am often slow to heed. For what is the meaning of song after storm, if it be not the birds' way of bidding mortals remember

“All God does if rightly understood
Shall work thy good?”

I wonder why I so lag behind the winged songsters in giving utterance to this truth. Is it because I lack their trust? And,—though the birds of the air are soulless in the higher sense of the word—I wonder too, is their gift of song a pledge that when our Saviour chose them as teachers of the tender lesson of God’s providing care for His creatures, He freed them from the bondage wherewith the rest of creation “groaneth and travaileth in pain”? Certain I am, though I were to listen all day and all night long, I never could catch so much as the faintest cry or moan in the song of birds. Perhaps it was thinking of this, or perchance it was the memories stirred by the gift of drift-wood, that made the going down of the sun last night something very solemn to me. And the emotion was intensified by the fact that almost immediately after the shining orb sank below the horizon, the vapor floating like a flock of white-winged doves above the boundary line which marks the

meeting-place of earth and sky, lost its bright color, and became again a gray bank of cloud, charged with such a chill wind I was glad to re-enter the house and close windows and doors. And then I set fire to a few splints of the wood, not because I needed the warmth, but because I was eager to observe the rare and wonderful flame-power I knew it possessed. I started the blaze with two or three of the most battered splints; they seemed the ones most likely to have caged memories; and truly they revealed hints of beauty and clearness of color I have never seen rivalled, for they flashed out hues rich and exquisite as the tints of flowers and shine of gems; red, yellow, and purple flame jets, blended into shadings, that were delicate as shadowy anemones, deep-hearted violets, harebells, and clover. One special piece caught the first spark, and burned with such marvellous persistence and brilliancy it half frightened me. It was a weird bit, encrusted by barnacles and tiny shells, and deep dyed by sea pigments — vivid green, burnt umber, and

lurid shades of terra-cotta. There was something so lonely and mysterious in the light of that drift-wood fire I longed for human companionship, and I was glad when the village doctor came, even though it was to bid me good-bye. He was a kindly, scholarly man, with a note of cheerfulness in his voice that at once broke the spell-like mystery of that dumb yet seemingly living flame. Doctor Flint was keen-sighted too, and one glance told him that I was saddened by the burning of those wreck fragments that only gave out their beauty of color when thus tested and tried by fire.— And with no delay he untwisted a tangle of sea-weed from the wood that lay on the table, while he said, with one of those rare smiles—that in a moment make a rugged face beautiful—“Don’t look so sober, Miss Annie; remember the ocean yields flowers and grasses which are fuller than these broken bits of wreck, of types significant of your life.”

But are they?—

And then Doctor Flint bade me examine the feathery delicate trails and sprays of the grass

he had unknotted from its close clasp around the wood. Held before the firelight, the web of weed was so ethereally delicate it seemed almost like tinted mist. "But we mistake in calling it either weed, flower, or grass," the doctor said; and he reminded me of the fact that the dainty spray had once been a home, tenanted by myriads of minute organisms, and that each of those tiny spars and points had been endowed with a life-work.—I knew the lesson the old man sought thus gently to teach me. Yes, its meaning was easy to read—and yet—so hard to live.—I realized this as I thought how "the invisible toil of an ephemeral point, conspiring with others in one great design, have converted the liquid waters into solid rock, the ocean into dry land," and how year after year their patient toil had continued till years grew to decades, and decades to centuries.—Yes, surely, the lesson the little zoophyte teaches me is *Patience*. I am glad Doctor Flint bade me observe it just now when I am about beginning a journal. Glad because the wonders of Nature run so parallel to the story

of mortal life, they give me courage to believe with the help of patience, I will understand the characters of my travelling companions. But I must keep in mind that in my study of character, as in the study of Nature, I will encounter many surprises, and some of them will dissipate cherished fancies and ideals. This experience will be a trifle hard, yet how often in destroying my fairest fancies Nature has revealed far lovelier realities; and so it may be in my knowledge of the world of hearts.

IV.

WITHOUT more of a preface I think you will understand how I came to make one of the group who this morning watched the shore of the dear home-land fade into distance. By my side stood Alice Fraser and Madie Leigh, two young girls—one aged twenty, the other eighteen—whom I had promised to “Mother” during our sojourn abroad. Not a light task, as I soon learned, and yet I undertook it with no more foreboding of care than a raindrop feels when it falls on an opening bud, that holds either the germ of future fruit or a blighted seed.

But I will not linger to moralize, for I want to introduce you to my companions. I regret that I must do this by written, rather than spoken words, nevertheless it is thus you must learn to know Alice and Madie and the other members of our party. It consisted of

the Mr. and Mrs. Howland father and I met during the mountain-top days of my girlhood's beautiful, happy summer—and their son and daughter, Frank and Edith, who were little children then—but who now are in the full strength and gladness of their youth. The Griffin brothers, Harry and Herbert, also belonged to our party, and a Mr. Stephen Forbes, a friend of Harry Griffin. I will begin my description of the appearance and marked traits of this little company with Madie, she being an easy creature to thus portray. Quite unlike Alice, who is such a difficult subject, she reminds me of a strain of music, which, as you know, is something so intangible, any effort to express the phraseology of melody by simple technicalities involves inextricable confusion, and yet,—and hence its analogy with Alice,—indefinable as music is, nothing is more rich in suggestion.

To return to Madie. She was the sunshine of the group; and if the Seasons are regarded as emblems of life, she was, too, emphatically a summer-day child. In truth,

the eighteen years of her earthly existence had not known so much as an hour of wintry weather in a spiritual sense. This greatly increased the responsibility I incurred by taking her under my care, for an untried character is so full of possibilities, and the test-touch of new experiences brings out such unlooked-for traits. I had a dim half-consciousness of this to-day, just after sailing, for I caught a hint that the whole of Madie had not yet expanded. Hence as yet she is only herself, and that must always mean incompleteness, for it means that a soul has not yet entered into oneness with the kingdom of Heaven which is within the heart.

In among these grave thoughts—like bluets blossoming in a corn-field—I wondered what the verdict of society would be regarding this maiden. Would she be called pretty and engaging? As I looked at her, smilingly I murmured, Yes. For Madie has the face of early morning. She is fair, her eyes blue and radiant with hope, while her complexion has the soft, delicate coloring which makes

the youthful beauty of a blonde something so sweet and flower-like. Her mouth cannot be described by line and rule, neither can the dimpling smiles that play about it, as sunshine plays with shadow. She has winsome ways, too, and a rippling laugh, while the tones of her voice are full and clear. This is the Madie outward observers behold, and it is a pleasant picture. But the question presses on my heart, What of the depth below this fair surface? Mystery and silence meet that query, which only time can answer; and leaving it, I will turn the light of description and focus it on Alice Fraser. She and Madie are as unlike as a gay cantata and a tender idyl. Alice had early felt the touch of loneliness which every orphaned child must, for however tender the care of friends, a child wants its mother. I remember how I wanted mine, despite the fond love which surrounded me. But whatever Alice felt during the days of childhood and girlhood—so her aunt told me—she seldom mentioned her mother, for by nature she is reserved, though strong and

steadfast in her affections. Reserve marks her manner, and it is blended with a dignity that wins notice from even slight acquaintances. Her voice also impels attention. It is not that she says anything especially wise or brilliant—in fact, what she says is nothing compared to what she seems to say. Indeed, her influence and power consists, in great measure, in this very suggestiveness. She possesses also the rare faculty of bringing out the brightest and the best in others. Not that she is faultless, for her character is like her face, where the features are regular without being faultlessly, or rather faultily, so. The chief charm of her countenance is expression; her eyes are dark and lustrous, and shine with the peculiar purity and calmness that gives to hazel eyes their persuasive, winning power. Her complexion is neither fair nor brown, but exquisitely smooth and soft. Generally she has but little color, but a true word, a noble act, a great thought, or a heart-beat of love, will in a moment brighten her cheeks and kindle a flash in her eyes. The

color of her hair, which she wears loosely coiled around her shapely head, is a matter of dispute among her admirers; and I hardly know whether to call it golden, auburn, or chestnut-brown. She is tall, almost too tall, though the proportions of her figure are perfect, and she has unusual ease of poise combined with precision and grace of movement. But why dwell on these details when it is not form or color that distinguishes Alice Fraser so much as a certain nobility and serenity which seems to enfold her in an atmosphere of indifference to trivial things, and which makes one feel that she is not absorbed and busy with aught that does not count. I think this would be evident, even if her face, all but her forehead, was veiled, for there is such a calm, peaceful look about her brow. It is a curiously suggestive study, this tracing of spiritual and mental history in the lines and expressions of a face, but if I am to tell you of the others of our party I must no longer tarry over the description of Alice. And yet she has such a hold on my heart, I find it hard

to leave her. As I said, she is two years older than Madie by actual count, and a dozen years in advance of her in thought and purpose. A conversation we had not more than an hour after sailing revealed this. She and Madie had been wondering what their time of "pleasuring," as Madie called it, would bring, when Alice said, "But how do we know it will be all pleasure?" And before Madie had time to reply, she turned to me querying, "Do you think we three women will grow one-sided, Miss Annie? There seems so much danger of our estimating people and things from one point of view." "That is impossible," Madie exclaimed. "Why, my blue eyes can no more see with your dark ones than Miss Annie's can see through Mr. Howland's spectacles."

"What I mean," Alice said, "is not actual seeing, so much as the risk of missing the friction of numbers; at school there were a variety of girls and teachers, all exercising different influences, and numbers always seem to tend toward expansion of thought and feeling."

As Madie turned away with a merry jest, Alice drew her sea-chair close to my side, asking :

“Do you not think the influence of numbers leads to larger dimensions of character, and a more generous estimate of people and surroundings?”

But I will not continue the recital of the conversation her question led to ; I only refer to it because it gives an inlook into her character, and because such natural, incidental talks are a truer index of our homely commonplace thoughts than more formal discussions, which call forth opinions on profounder subjects.

How tenderly our Saviour's life on earth enforced this truth. It might almost be called the gospel of “lesser details.” Think of the delicate touches by which He illumined the seemingly insignificant, and made little things tell on daily life far more than great ones. Hence the command which followed the raising of the little maid : “Give her to eat,” and for Lazarus, “Loose the grave-

clothes." Think, too, how at the very hour of His deepest anguish He said to John, "Behold thy Mother."——

And now I will scatter these blessed memories by a vigorous mental shake, while I proceed to picture Mr. and Mrs. Howland, Edith, and the quartette of young men, each of whom possesses an individuality as pronounced as that which belongs to Alice Fraser and Madie Leigh.

V.

I AM half ashamed to confess how alert and active the impulse is to find fault when I think of describing Mrs. Howland. The simple truth is, her presence jars me now just as it did in my young days, and I feel as I did then, a childish desire to tumble the ruffles and flounces of her well-fitting gowns that are as perfect as Paris artists can make them. This is a perfection Mrs. Howland can well appreciate, for she is a proficient in knowledge of silks, satins, ribbons, laces, and jewels. Indeed, her well-trained eye can in a minute detect an imitation, and she feels all due scorn for the wearer of it, though it is not an emotion like that which stirred Ruskin's righteous soul when he wrote, "A woman of feeling would not wear false jewels it is an imposition and the wearing them is as inexcusable as a lie, and nobody wants

ornaments in this world, but everybody wants integrity."—Ah, if only they did!—

But I am criticising, not describing, Mrs. Howland. She is a slender, delicate woman, and retains much of the prettiness of her youth, though she is the type of blonde wont to fade early. Being used to society she is well versed in current phrases, and familiar with the topics discussed in the gay world. She has also something of a gift at repartee and in one sense is never a dull companion, and yet the measured, modulated tones of her voice weary me more than an all-day mountain climb over a rough road.

It is a relief to turn from her to thoughts of Herbert Griffin, or Bertie as we all call him. He is twenty-one years old, but his physical weakness and a sweet confidingness of disposition, make him seem in many ways like a lad still in his teens. And yet Bertie's heart is so brave and true, he is so incapable of evading, and so fearless when principles, or the faith dear to him as his life, are assailed, I think he will

exert a more powerful influence for good than either of the other young men. One glance at his blue eyes reveals his sweet, child-like soul, for they are clear and guileless as Heaven. In fact, Bertie, though his figure is so misshapen, his step so halting and slow, has an earnestness of purpose, and an elevation of character that rank him among the few people one meets—even in a long life—who make being good and true seem the simplest, most natural things in the world; in this he reminds me of Jack and my grandfather.

Harry—Bertie's brother—is twenty-six years old. He is fine-looking and rarely gifted, intellectually and physically. I knew he was a first-rate classical scholar, but I was quite unprepared for the keen interest he expressed in the problems, social, religious, and scientific, which are stirring the minds of the earnest thinkers of this age of unrest and upheaving of traditional dogma and theory. I find he reads all sorts of books and is familiar with all sorts of opinions; and he walks fearlessly

on the very edge of spiritual and mental precipices, speculating and weighing every proposition before he accepts its conclusions. And yet, eager as his mind is, he fails to recognize that the only key to all the religious discussions in the world is found in the doctrine of the Cross.—

Harry has a peculiar charm of manner, though he is quiet and undemonstrative, and makes no show of his learning. Indeed the only sign of masterfulness I observe in him is manifested in his treatment of Bertie. His gaze never rests on the deformed lad without a certain tenderness softening every line of his face. Only strong, masterful men have that look—men who can be as gentle as they are strong. His eyes are black, the color to command; his mouth and well-formed chin tell also of decision of character, and he gives me the impression of a man, who in making his life-plans, will “seek for knowledge through the study of men, and their mighty sayings and doings,” rather than by following Bertie’s preference, which evidently is for “nature

with its hush of silent work and nameless utterance."

Frank Howland was Harry's college chum, and they continue warm friends, though Frank is Harry's inferior physically and mentally. Nevertheless he is a strong youth, and has a tall, imposing figure, while his features express energy, and his dark eyes possess a power of revealing his emotions, which make them one minute flashing and decided, the next almost dreamy. The dreamy look, however, is not in harmony with Frank's character, which is very matter-of-fact and free from illusions, except in a certain over-estimate of himself, which a few years' contact with the rub and friction of life will cure, and his age being only twenty-five there is time enough for that. In appearance Edith is much like Frank, though she is of medium height, and a little too plump and robust for fashion's ideal, but not for health and loveliness. Her coloring also is, according to Mrs. Howland's standard, a trifle too pronounced, her cheeks too rosy; while her large, wide-open eyes are as blue as the

sky, and her hair auburn, with a touch of gold in some lights. In disposition she is not at all like Frank, for she is entirely free from self-conceit; she has, too, a warm heart, enthusiastic nature, and romantic imagination—traits which make me tremble for her future, for though engaging they are dangerous possessions unless accompanied by “sanctified common sense,” and a keener intellect than Edith Howland’s.

I come now to Mr. Forbes.—Some people would think him handsome, and he certainly would be recognized anywhere as a scholarly man. But he does not attract me, and I feel a lack of confidence in his entire genuineness; perhaps this is because he misconstrues my words, giving them a meaning I did not intend. Then, too, he points so many of his remarks with an interrogation, which indicates a want of steadfastness in his views, and this gives something of unrest to his manner, and I fear it will make his influence unsettling.

And now just a word regarding Mr. Howland, and then, a truce to description. He impresses

me, as he always has, as a gentlemanly, quiet man, courteous and well-dressed, but essentially commonplace; and yet he gave me a thought yesterday which will, I think, underlie these journal pages like a foundation-stone.

We had been talking of names, and the importance attached to them in olden times, when the most ordinary titles were significant because of their twofold meaning. Alice maintained this twofoldness still existed, though it is seldom defined. "My friends call me Alice," she said; "that is the name by which their lips know me, but surely in their hearts my real name is the essence of my character, and expresses what I am to them." In reply Mr. Howland dwelt on the disclosures that would follow if this spiritual nomenclature were to find utterance in language. Half as though speaking to himself he said, "Then we would know the name of the God we each serve," and a sad look shone in his gray eyes as he turned to me, saying, "What is the name of your God?" Softly I whispered, "*Father.*"

After a minute Mr. Howland added, almost as though he had not heard my whispered word, "I suppose every one of our party would give a different reply to that question if they answered truly."

Would they?—that thought so intensifies the desire, already in my heart, to help others to the knowledge of God's Fatherhood, for the experience of my life has so taught me the "*Our Father*" title is the One, and only Name, by which we can know God in a way that will help us to accept as His Will,—and hence part of our education,—the broken hopes, tear-stained hours of disappointment and adverse circumstances which every soul encounters at one time or another. How can I pass this blessed knowledge on to others? It is a question involved in the same difficulty that pervades the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ"—and I can only meet it in the same way—and that is by *Love*. And truly the older I grow, and the more I understand my own history, the more I see that "the spirit

of wisdom is the spirit of love," and the true way to gain influence over others must be by having love toward them—the real love which shines in Christina Rossetti's lines :

"O ye who taste that love is sweet,
Set way-marks for all doubtful feet
That stumble on in search of it.

"Sing notes of love ; that some who hear
Far off inert may lend an ear,
Rise up and wonder and draw near.

"Lead life of love ; that others who
Behold your life, may kindle too
With love and cast their lot with you."

VI.

A VOYAGE fills in life much the same place that a rest fills in music. There is such a sense of repose in the isolation of the wide stretch of sea, unbroken often by even so much as the speck of a distant sail. Sometimes I almost feel as though I were poised between this world and the next, and it is hard to tell which seems the most real and the most near. At least it was thus I felt when the gray of night began to steal over the water yesterday, and leaving Alice and Madie with the others I found a secluded corner for my sea-chair, and wrapping my plaid about me and donning my sea-hood, I settled down for a quiet think all by myself. I can hardly define the sensation being out of sight of land gives me. It is half painful and half sublime. It makes me realize how large the world is—

and that always gives a sense of loneliness—at the same time I feel an exultation, that makes my heart beat fast with a joyous trembling which is akin to the quivering shimmer of the moonshine that thrilled the waves last night, with a gladness quite unlike their mid-day rolling and heaving to and fro; for in that new revelation of the ever-changing sea, the broken wave-lines no longer hinted of impatience and restlessness; on the contrary they suggested the calm of the immeasurable ocean—Jack's grave. I am so glad of this, for I have dreaded the sea, fearing the realization that it was his tomb, would steal over me with the depressing influence of a shadow-thought. But where I looked for sadness, I found peace; and my fear proves another of the many ways by which the Heavenly Father teaches me, that He does not leave His children to meet conflict alone, and that His promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," delivers me from the sin of doubting His upholding grace as much as it does from any more tangible sin. But like all the promises of spiritual victory, it is con-

ditional, and that "*shall not*," will only prevail in proportion to my confidence in it. I wonder why I find it hard to keep this in mind, when I so well know that part of faith's work is the honoring Christ by *expecting* from Him what He has promised to bestow.

I am wandering from the quiet I sought that I might ponder how I could help my companions find the true answer to Mr. Howland's question. Somehow it has awakened queries in my mind that have been silent for years, and they revolve around the always bewildering *why* of sorrow, sin, and suffering; those elements in life which Mr. Forbes and Harry Griffin call fate, or the inexorable law of Nature, but which I call the bondage we let environ our souls when we yield them to the supreme control of any mastering emotion, whether it be a matter of opinion, prejudice, ambition, possession, pleasure, or even intellect, and sometimes, alas, religion—or more correctly, creed. Yes—surely any of these emotions can so rule the soul that they become the Name of its God!—But did any of

them thus control the members of our party?—that is what I sought to discover as I sat in the twilight, and I began my analysis with Mrs. Howland—of whom I speedily disposed, for position and leadership in society is so evidently her god. As for Mr. Howland, I gave little heed to his ruling motive in life, neither did I linger over thoughts of Bertie, for his soul is an open page easy to read, and illumined with holy meanings. The only bondage he knows is bounded by the limitations of mortality—his poor, weak, deformed body—but that is powerless to stay the wings of his soul—and it is a grand thing to feel one's spiritual wings. While Bertie Griffin is thus easy to understand, Harry is a problem, and yet it requires but little penetration to discover that he possesses the robust common-sense which is apt to belong to a physique like his; and he has a ready wit, and is quick with prompt comparisons; the love of intellectual combat also is strong in him, though under perfect control in his intercourse with us women, whom he treats with an old-time knightly

chivalry that is most attractive. It is in matters of thought that Harry perplexes me: I perceive that he belongs to what is called the "progressive order" of minds and that according to the diction of a certain class of religionists, he is a disciple of the so-called "new theology," of which reason is the weapon that has taken the place of emotion. Whatever may be the merits of one over the other, certainly Harry's outlook is generous, while his aim is the welfare of mankind. And while he is a doubter, he believes in God; he is also a devout student of theistic philosophy; he accepts the historical Christ as a wonderful man, and he has a head-knowledge of the Bible which leads him to defend it as a book written by spiritual agencies. But here he stops, and with no effort to check it admits into his mind the controversy involved by making a god of Reason. And yet, reason, independent of faith, means mystery; and mystery Harry resents, as I observed this morning, when Bertie said, "Mystery must be the condition of human life, and the only way of be-

coming reconciled to it, is by the faith which accepts the Atonement, not as framed in dogma and creed, but in all the fullness of Love which manifests it, as 'an at-tune-ment, a harmonizing of the divine and human.' "

But Harry has no wish to thus accept it, I plainly see, and so "the chasm between God and the human soul, over which Christ, the God-man, human yet divine, is the only bridge," yawns beneath him in all its breadth and depth, and so subtle is the mental attraction he shuts his eyes to the sophistry which inculcates good works without faith; scientific demonstration without revelation; and the clear-cut dogmatism of a religion which forfeits the blessed mystery of the unseen for the cold realisms of the seen, and leaves the mind with a puzzle in the head and a hunger in the heart.

In many respects Mr. Forbes and Harry Griffin take much the same view of religious subjects, and yet there is as much difference in the real position of the two men as there is between the strong, fresh grass of

rich meadow-lands and the rank, sickly growth of the marsh-swamp. Nevertheless, in a conversation this morning which brought out the opinions of the young folk, Stephen Forbes so skillfully hid this difference that Alice, telling me of their talk, called him an altruistic, because he expressed sympathy with the principles of what he termed the "new brotherhood," which numbers in its ranks many of the earnest men with whom he had come in contact during the years he spent at Oxford. But where Alice feels confidence in him I feel distrust, for I observe that when he talks of Christianity it is "a Christianity without Christ, which is no Christianity." I also observe that while he talks of wide human sympathies he is entirely unable to illustrate them by any personal experience. Neither does he turn opportunities for good to their best account. But I will not try to define Mr. Forbes, for there is something about him that baffles me, and I feel as though he would always continue an enigma, quite beyond my power to solve. It would be difficult to find

a sharper contrast than that suggested by the spiritual atmosphere which surrounds him and Frank Howland. Frank is as open as the day, and makes no secret of the fact that his outlook, when serious subjects are considered, is narrowed by the limitations of what, for lack of a better name, I call his traditional conscience. His temperament induces this to a certain degree, for he is susceptible, and naturally active; hence he is influenced by ritual and form, and being somewhat obstinate, he is inclined to an intolerant adherence and enforcement of the claims of the special creed of that branch of the church to which he belongs. This narrowness of spiritual vision causes Frank to overlook the fact that the seeds of denominationalism exist in the very nature of individual character, and their growth is inseparable from its free development.

Edith also clings to creed, but she is not self-conceited, and she has a sweet amiability of temper which helps her to yield to others. She is indolent, too, and inclined to let others think for her. Indeed, she maintains that she

hates argument, and the endeavor to explain "*how* and *why*" and "*like* and *dislike*."

As for Alice and Madie I will not attempt to define them. When I tried last night I found it impossible, for I am constantly making fresh discoveries in their characters. There is, too, an element in close companionship which renders it well-nigh impossible to formulate character by words.

VII.

THOUGH I am trying so hard to live in the present, I find, after all, the years that lie behind me make my world ; and yet though the events connected with them are so real and dear, the self of that by-gone time is almost a stranger to the self of now. But I had better not press this thought, for it savors of reflections that would soon confuse my mental vision by centring thought on self. It is humbling to find that the natural tendency of introspection is thus to foster self-consciousness. And how soon that weakens and wilts the sweetest and fairest spiritual emotions. How speedily, too, the thought of what *we* accomplish and what *we* are to Christ, takes the place of the thought of what He does in and through us. And now, having given myself warning of danger, I repeat the fact, that in many ways my former self is a

stranger to the self of to-day, and the past comes back to me like the echo of the song I used to sing, "So near and yet so far."

And this is well, for it is not the stories of our lives but their issues that make them of value; and I would fain have my by-gone only touch this record through its results, and they do not require subtle analysis any more than one needs to probe the why of the spring wind, that if future fruit is to be brought to perfection, must needs stir among the blossoms till the ground is strewn with white and pink petals.

I wonder if the truth that it is wrong to let past sorrow dull present effort to do, and to be, is one of the things our Saviour included in His command: "Let the dead bury their dead." It is a command which assuredly does not involve forgetfulness of our dear departed, hence I think it must mean simply, the enforcement of the duty and privilege of taking up the interests of life even when its enthusiasm has gone; and this never hinders our keeping our dear ones in loving remem-

brance, by reference to their aforetime wishes, and by recalling their words and looks, speaking of them as naturally as we speak of the friends from whom we are separated by an earthly count of miles. But in all matters connected with those gone from earth we need to be very gentle in judgment, for people differ in their feelings as much as the leaves of trees differ in form and color. And while it comforts me to speak freely of Jack, grandpapa, and my father, I have friends who cannot bear to hear or to mention the names of their departed. Then, too, as I learned when father died, feelings vary with years and circumstances. Thus the important thing is to have the soul in harmony with the deep inner meaning of sorrow, for then, despite time and circumstance, sorrow becomes the warp in life's history on which Divine light falls with an illumining that transfigures it into sacrifice. And "the spirit of sacrifice is the revelation of a larger life," for it leads to the heart of the "life hid in Christ." One does not need to follow the Lord long before

learning this, so repeatedly is it enforced in the Gospel, where in almost every chapter there is some proof that Christ "as man held all that is man's His own." And how one does learn to live through others, how their joys and sorrows become one's own. This is a crown that belongs to middle age, for it needs, I think, something of maturity before sympathy can be given in all its fullness. In youth the heart so shrinks from this proxy life, and even now I find it somewhat desolate in certain aspects; and it is still a little hard to accept the fact that there is a sense in which I must pay for what I give. But it must be thus, for the law of spiritual life is "conflict before victory, discipline before the prize." Nevertheless, the command which bids rejoice with the glad and weep with the sorrowful, is like an opening flower-bud, laden with the sweetness of an eternal blessing, which begins to give forth its fragrance as soon as ever one meets the least demand for service or sympathy. How truly my own experience proves this, and in how many ways

the summons to put self aside for the sake of others comes as life goes on. Yes, truly, age is almost glorified by the added opportunities for service it gives, and yet sometimes they seem such mere trifles. But whatever the seeming, the fact remains, that whether it be great or small, an opportunity to serve another never comes to us without leaving something after it has gone. It leaves us "either stronger or weaker, our sympathies broader or narrower, our spiritual vision keener or duller."——

I have strayed from the thought of the different comforting and help we need in different times of trouble; I return to it to emphasize the dear truth that difference in outward manifestations of grief and difference in the ways by which it finds consolation, does not interfere with the unchanging fact, that our departed know and understand us, and however the world may judge, we need never fear the criticism of the dear souls who have known themselves the struggles, the weakness, and the defeats of this earthly life, but who

are now surrounded by the Love atmosphere that encompasses that Heavenly Land.

How the thought that they are looking down now into my very heart, their pure scrutiny knowing its every feeling and desire, makes me long to be more worthy of their love, and how near and close it makes the sense of their spiritual presence, and what a comfort that is; and yet, when this soothing began to whisper in my heart, with it came a fear—that it is hard not to feel even now—I mean the sense that they must be disappointed, as they took their first look from Heaven into my soul—for somehow I could not make myself realize that they looked away from the evil and saw only the struggling good. But now when I do in part realize it, it opens a glimpse into the transcendent life of the Hereafter that is beyond the telling by words, and which is doubly precious because it is revealed through Christ.

But my work for to-day is not to stand thus “gazing up to Heaven,” and yet, “earth itself answers to our view of Heaven,” hence

no gaze will be so helpful as a Heavenly one in smoothing out, and making plain life's story. It will help me, too, to accept its meaning as manifested by a light which

“Believes because it loves,”

and by the faith that finds

“Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be
As more of Heaven in each I see.”

Faith and Love! I am so glad they are hand-in-hand interpreters of life and its meaning. For faith makes the past so wonderfully suggestive, while love lifts the veil that comes between me and the Light, whenever I make the hopeless effort to fathom, by my own unaided “petty plumb-line of earthly wisdom, the profound abyss of Providence.”

VIII.

THE quiet hour to which I have already alluded proved rich in inward blessings ; it has helped me to remember also the wise maxim, that “it is one thing to grow old in the past, and another to grow old in the present.” It was one of those rare times that come now and then laden with calm, holy impressions that prompt a longing for communion with the Infinite tenderness and Heavenly Love ;—one of those hours which whisper :

“Look not on thine own loss, but look beyond,
And take the Cross for glory and for guide.”

But “to behold” and even to touch the Cross is unlike the command which bids “bear it.” How will I—how have I stood that test ?

The reply to that question means more than volumes of meditation on the Cross—oh, so much more !——

The days which followed my night of musing, were like dreams of mid-ocean beauty; the water continued calm as a mountain lake, not even the fringe of a storm clouded the sky, and when we landed the blue over-arched us still.

Our object during this first month of our tour is Switzerland, and the pleasure it is bringing me, is teaching, that happiness is a God-given privilege, whereas I started forth in search of it as a duty. Alice and Madie are hardly a step behind me in their enjoyment of the mountain glory surrounding us. And yet, we each find a different meaning in the highlands and the lowlands, in the deep ravines and snow-capped peaks, the swiftly flowing rivers leaping into cataracts, and the lazy brooklets that go singing on their way. The Alpine forests, and the Alpine flowers also, are traced with messages which stir different emotions in our minds. But the language of nature, though so full, is a hieroglyphic too intangible for me to even try to decipher; "it is a thing to be felt, not under-

stood ; to be loved, not comprehended—a music of the eyes, a melody of the heart.”

Being a woman of the world, and reputed wise in her knowledge of love and lovers, Mrs. Howland detects danger from the constant intercourse of our young folk. Her caution vexes me, and yet I cannot shut my eyes to the truth that even though the second week of our mountaineering has not yet ended, it has come to be a matter of course that Harry Griffin should escort Edith Howland, while Bertie, despite his limping step, is the one who gathers Alpine roses, starry edelweiss, and delicate ferns for Alice, by whose side Mr. Forbes takes his place as knight-errant without so much as asking, “by your leave.” As for Madie she and Frank Howland are boon companions, and have been for years, and I see no cause for fear that my peerless Alice will be attracted by Stephen Forbes. Why, even to my middle-aged eyes there is nothing of youngness about him either in manner or appearance. And I think I can safely continue to find all the comfort I can out of

the quiet hills—the everlasting hills—and “the old rolling skies” with their ever-varying aspect of light and shade, without troubling for the hearts of my maidens. I am with them, too, in all their rambles, and I listen with eager interest to the interchange of ideas and opinions which make so large a part of their bright, intelligent conversation. For they are not behind the habit of the age, and they reason of science and theology, the natural and the supernatural, the seen and the unseen, with as much ease and freedom as the youth of a former generation were wont to play battledore and shuttlecock.

But however careless and lacking in reverence the general tone, Bertie and Alice exert an uplifting influence, for to them God and the soul are so real. Bertie especially does this, for he has that “inward light” which can change shadows into realities, and which makes me feel the pity it is that we are any of us ever less than our best. Alice says, sometimes, as she listens to his earnest words, it almost seems as if all her life till now, she

had been looking at objects through the sailor's night-glass, which as it scans the horizon inverts objects on the retina: for so many things which hitherto have seemed real resolve themselves into shadows, while the things that formerly appeared shadows fix and condense themselves into eternal realities.

Just here I will note a conversation that serves as an index to many that occur these summer days. It took place the morning after we arrived at Interlaken, when as I sauntered down the promenade under the shade of the great walnut-trees, Alice joined me. And linking her arm in mine, she repeated Tennyson's line,

"I am part of all I have seen."

As she thus said, we both looked with something of awe in our gaze—and more of it in our hearts—toward the mountains, and I did not wonder Alice added, "How are we a part?"

Certainly this is a question which holds manifold meanings. For—how are we a part

of smiling fields, sombre forests, and mountains full of peace, and rivers full of joy?—

It is easy to understand how Madie and Edith are like the early summer that surrounds us, laughing in flowers and breathing fragrance on the balmy air ; and how Alice is emblemed by the calm of a mountain peak ; and Bertie's simple purity of heart and persuasive influence, by the thrilling joy of the steadily flowing river. But what part of the scene held a type of my middle-aged self that morning, when the summer still lingered near the threshold of spring ; when the flowers were opening, red, blue, and yellow, amid the green leafage ; when the birds were singing on every side, the doves cooing, sparrows chirping, and larks soaring ; when gay-winged insects were floating in the air, and every blossom was a chalice of sweet odor ? If it had been November, or even an October day, just before the brown leaves fall, then I might have found an emblem for myself—but not now, surely not now !—And where was there a suggestion of Mr. Forbes in that fair sun-

shiny hour and prospect? There were strong trees, sheltering rocks, and fields of ripening grain to emblem Harry and Frank, but they offered no type of a man like Stephen Forbes, who had shut himself away from the heart of nature, and "the faith which can behold each image from the region of nature transfigured in the realm of grace," for to a devout mind,

"The hills shall be girt with their flowers like laughter,

And the walks with their sheep shall be white;
And the lawns be corn-muffled. Thereafter,
The hills and the walks and the corn-lands
Shall raise music—yea, psalms of delight."

Yes, I feel sure Mr. Forbes is debarred from the recognition of this by his desire to rank as "one of those prophets of modern science who are disposed to show us in the future a city of God *minus* God; a Paradise *minus* the Tree of Life; a millennium with education to perfect the intellect, and sanitary improvements to emancipate the body from a long catalogue of evils." But despite this, "Sorrow will not be abolished; immortality will

not be bestowed ; but we shall have perfectly drained houses to be wretched in. The news of our misfortunes, the tidings that turn the hair white and half break the strong man's heart, will be conveyed to us from the ends of the earth, by the agency of a telegraphic system without a flaw." And yet, Mr. Forbes—while he made no secret that this dream of modern thought was the system he followed—was the one who broke the silence that after her question held Alice and myself spell-bound as we gazed mountainward,—or was it Heavenward we looked?—

He said : " If you wait you will find, Miss Alice, plenty of answers to your query as to how you are a part of all you see." The sound of his voice startled me. I thought we were alone, but no, he was there by Alice's side keeping his self-appointed guard. Bertie, too, had joined us unobserved. Truly for a minute I was vexed. There is a persistency in Stephen Forbes' attendance on Alice that I do not like. Still I was interested to hear his reply as she asked : " What will wait-

ing bring?" "Echoes," he straightway said; "for they are rolling between the beauty and the art and the age of these foreign lands, and their language is fruitful of wonders." And he smiled as he added, "What a harvest you will reap." Were his words earnest or half satirical? I could not tell; anyway the thought they suggested kindled a flash in Alice's mind that brightened the color in her cheeks and deepened the light in her dark eyes, while it played over her lips like sunshine over a field of waving grain, and she smiled as she looked at Mr. Forbes with a quick glance of grateful acknowledgment. Despite this, it was Bertie—for whom she had no smile—who helped her to find the thought's heart of earnest meaning.

"I suppose," he said, "the chief object of beautiful scenes is that they can work into ideas, and as we thus use them they become ours." Alice again looked at Mr. Forbes as in response to Bertie's words, she asked:

"Is this really their mission; as we seem to forget them do they quietly work in us,

and at length out of us in thoughts and forms of beauty?" It was still Bertie who replied: "Yes, surely,—the only difference being in the capacity of different people to receive, for the power to make over is independent of people; that is inherent in the nature of beauty."

Mr. Forbes suddenly became annoyed at the turn the conversation had taken, and he and Alice wandered into the woods in search of ferns and brakes, which he said grew in plenty just off the roadside. Meanwhile, Bertie and I sat down on a rustic seat to await their return. It was then that Bertie asked: "Do you not think, Miss Annie, that while beauty here is a relative term, dependent on each one's receptivity, beauty in Heaven will be absolute?" After a moment, half as though speaking to himself, he murmured: "And if while on earth relative beauty is so much to us, what will the beauty of Heaven be!"——

IX.

JOURNEYING by proxy is so easy to accomplish, nowadays, when there is no end of all one can enjoy through reading and hearing of the pleasures of travel. Pictures and photographs also are so multiplied, the most habitual stay-at-home can hardly fail to be familiar with distant scenes of beauty and grandeur, as well as with the master works of Art, both in painting and sculpture. And yet, even the most vivid and accurate descriptions, illustrated by maps and views, are no more like the real thing than a pressed flower is like a fresh one. I am impressed with this as I behold mountains and glaciers, lakes and ravines, cathedrals and palaces. I am somewhat humiliated, too, by the thought of the many years I have let slip away without making any effort to see this vast, wonderful, and beautiful world which God made for our en-

joyment, for surely the beauty of nature is a sign that our Heavenly Father means us to take the good of here and now.

Oddly, the very day I decided to make this European tour, I chanced to read a sketch in a magazine which brought out this truth as clearly as light brings out color. It was a simply-told story of an aged French Abbé, who explained his presence on the summit of a distant mountain-peak by telling how, during a severe illness, there had come an hour when he dreamed that he had bade farewell to earth, and was in the Arms of the Bon Dieu. And as he rested in their safe enfolding, an angel approached, asking: "Tell me, new-comer to this Heavenly Land, of the beauties of God's world—the earth—your afore-time home." But alas, he had nothing to tell, for he had been so busy preaching about Heaven, he had forgotten to observe earth. Sorely he felt this, when the angel said: "If you did not learn earth's alphabet, how can you expect to understand Heaven's language?" True enough, how could he? For—what is

earth but a place in which we are to learn how to step Heavenward? Hence that father of the Church determined, when health returned, that he would no longer overlook the present lessons taught by the beauty of this world, for the sake of contemplating the promise of the greater wonder and beauty of the Future world.

I repeated this sketch to the young folk the other day, and as I ended it, Alice pointed the moral, by softly quoting the lines :

“Impatient of the noon-day shall we miss
The sunrise we shall never see again?
And all the tender colors of the dawn,
The visions of the crimson clouds that hang
Above us, and the lovely morning star
That will be vanished when the sun is high?”——

But this is not a journal of details, and I must not tarry over these summer-day hours. I am determined also to avoid descriptions of scenery, and yet my pen lingers as though fascinated as I recall our ascent of the Jura. It was morning, and the sunlight touched the high cliffs with a glory which threw the deep,

woody valleys into darker shadows, while the far-off plains of France—seen between the opening of the hills—were veiled in a soft, vapory light. Always to be remembered, also, is the sudden turn in the road, which gave us our first glimpse of Geneva and its Lake, with the background of Alps, peak beyond peak, mountains of ice and frozen billows of glaciers, with Mount Blanc towering like a guardian angel over all.

Somehow the grandeur of that scene half frightened me, and I was glad when with girl-like enthusiasm Alice nestled her hand into mine. The action suddenly flooded my heart with memories of the glad, joyous summer of my own girl-life, when, among the high hills of my native land, I learned to know the mountains—God's Uplands—where I learned also to *feel* my faith. Remembering that time, and all it led to, I could but wonder what new unfoldings of life awaited me beyond the "Gates of the Hills" now opening. Would they guide to "a path up to the gate of that mountain-summit from whence one returns not"?—

It is strange, but as I thus remembered the past I understood for the first time that during my early days I saw less with my eyes than with my heart.—

Perhaps it is thus I now see! Perhaps it is why I was glad that morning, when the others only saw lichens, Bertie Griffin spied a flower high up above ordinary vegetation.— Flowers and lichens! They are tender emblems of beauty, innocence, and love; and they read me their parable from up amid the snows.—And I think Alice Fraser read it too!

X.

I WONDER, when shadows are so easy to understand, why they are gifted with so many interpretations. Two children playing under my window suggested their significance when viewed as life emblems. And these suggestions so fit into my present need, for I am a good deal bewildered these days by the problems that hedge in existence.

The younger of the children is a little lad not more than five or six, while his companion is a boy full twelve years old. They are brothers, I infer, and evidently English. I looked at their shadows clearly reflected on the high wall opposite, more than at the children, and I could also see reflected there a tiny, rabbit-like form, Rob, the elder, made by placing his hands together and folding his fingers. Little Regie thought it a wonderful picture, and with a child's eagerness he asked,

“How do you do it, Rob?” This proved a puzzling question to Rob, for he was too unlearned to explain, either to himself or Regie, why his hands coming between the sunshine and the wall made that impression. Neither did he know aught of the fact that, as mortals walk the paths of life on which sunlight falls, their shadows must always accompany them, in lengths varying according to the place they have reached in life’s orbit. The significance of this and the truth that only at sunrise and sunset our shadows touch the horizon never seemed to me full of meaning as it does now. And equally significant is it that only just at noon-time can we tread them under our feet, while at the half-way places that mark nine in the morning of life’s day and three of its afternoon, they are almost our actual length.

Viewing this from a spiritual outlook, how it enforces the unity and undertone harmony of life; revealing that as the earth is a perfect round, so the experiences of life round out into completeness, and age leads back to

childhood's starting-place—Heaven—and that means "God who is our Home."

The emblem of noon-tide shadows enhances also the period of middle life, as the time when self becomes a stepping-stone to higher things, because it is the season of the soul's greatest spiritual and mental vigor, and hence the richest in possibilities for usefulness and self-mastery.

But the pathways strewn with opportunities were not the ones immediately suggested by Rob's shadow-picture, for the thoughts it first stirred in my mind were linked with the brightness and beauty of the morning; when sunlight and a breeze—and that means a kaleidoscope of light and shade—are playing over the green grass in such quick succession neither the one nor the other lingers long enough to leave a shadow. But I will not follow their example—for I want to watch for other shadow-pictures that somehow I feel will prove interpreters of how I am being taught every hour, that despite the much of sorrow that has come to me, gladness is also my heritage because I

am God's child. What an anthem of praise the joy-notes of the Bible proclaim! As I count them over they are glad as the ringing of Christmas-bells. Hark! "The *joy* of the Lord is strength." "Sing, O Heaven, and be *joyful*, O earth." "My soul shall be *joyful* in my God." "I will *joy* in the God of my salvation." "*Joy* in God through Christ Jesus." "Yea—my heart greatly rejoiceth."

With these words singing like music in my soul, I glanced from the window before which my writing-table stands. The outlook comprises the deep blue of the Heaven overhead, and a background of snowy mountain-peaks, while near at hand I catch a glimpse of the high-road, and of the open common, where the short brown grass resembles moss.

The first shadow that makes a life-picture for me in this scene, is cast by a man slowly travelling on toward the village. He looks as though he had journeyed far, for his rough clothes are weather-stained and worn; he seems weary too, and he has passed out of the glare of the sunshiny common, into the

shade of the trees, and sat down on a grassy knoll just off from the road. His attitude tells of thoughtfulness, and rough-looking as he is, he just reached over into the sunshine and gathered a handful of wayside flowers—a cluster of bluebells—I saw them yesterday, and I lingered to observe the delicate tracery of gray their reflection made on the golden sunshine, it was like a sigh among smiles. And now they are even more tender and full of pathos—"a song without words," for flowers gathered by a toil-worn hand straightway become a poem in suggestion or a picture in outline. This is how by simple things God's Book—the world—teaches lessons in Art.

The next shadow-picture which greets me is made by a tiny boy, whose home is in a shabby little house that nestles for shelter under the great trees, much as the birds' nests do up among their branches. He is a quaint little object, and yet, neither too forlorn nor too insignificant to make a mark on the sunlit common. And his reflection, small as it is, touches me more than the man's shadow.

But it is time I gathered the lessons held in these emblem shadows.

The meaning of the dusty roadway, the open common and the refreshing shade from the over-arching tree-boughs is easy to understand. Yes—life is often like a dusty roadway over which God's Love broods: "A shadow in the daytime from the heat, and a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."—"A shelter, a strong tower"—if we trust "in the covert of His wings.—Trust! it is an emotion so simple and yet so profound! It has taken me long to define the place it fills in my soul, and even yet I am not far beyond the outer-rim of its full blessedness. I do not refer to the natural instinctive form of trust in the course of nature, in man, and in self; no, what I mean is that trust in God which *feels* Him a Father whose Love is absolute, and whose wisdom is perfect to discern, and to do, what is best for me despite my inability to see the *why* of that best. And yet, though I have not attained this complete trust, I have enough of it to be

able to smile even though it may be through tears while I whisper: "Blessed is trust in the Lord; none of them that trust in Him shall be left desolate; He shall deliver them and save them because they trust in Him."

I know also the foundation of trust is Love, and this imparts a new life and meaning to the innate knowledge, that "in nature what has been will be," for it infuses Love into the gentle breeze of summer, and into the wild storm-winds of winter. Love smiles, too, from every growing thing; the least flower as well as vine, shrub, tree, and waving grain, all tell of it, while the sun, moon, and stars repeat the tale which is illustrated by the dawning of day after day, and the darkening of night after night. Thinking of trust, I find the *words* in which my mind frames it, are musical terms, the sureness that perfect Love controls the forces of Nature answering to the calm deep bass, while my trust in humanity is like the midway notes, and trust in self the treble. And the work of each is so clearly defined they make when united a complete har-

mony. Trust in mankind being the outcome of Christ's command, "Love one another," while trust in self is like the wings by which a bird soars—it lifts the soul nearer to God and magnifies the truth that while our strength is His, and given by Him, yet the more we use that strength, the more of it He will give us.

How this intensifies the desire for more earnestness in serving Him; and how it destroys the falsity of the idea that we need do nothing ourselves because He will act in and by us. Nevertheless this is one of those paradox truths which it is always somewhat difficult to understand, for the ground of our recognizing it is, after all, centred in the *Will*—"this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you," and so we could neither serve, pray, or rejoice "without a known will of God, and it is the humility which recognizes the strength external to its own which is the source of service, joy, and prayer."

Thus *real trust is grace in action*, and this leads to the command, "Be ye perfect," which with shame I confess, I am always tempted to

skip, because of the immensity of the requirement. And yet, viewing it thus is a mere surface view, and an isolation and enforcement of a single word apart from its actual requirement. Our Saviour's human life assures us of this, for the Gospel does not hide the fact that there were times when the God-man knew what it meant to have the material obscure the spiritual, and the knowledge of the testing of the faith of the Sinless One runs parallel with the sense of sin the sinful feel in presence of a command bidding them "be perfect." It is only because Christ did thus sound to the depths of the human heart that He became able to be *touched* with the feeling of our weakness. And apart from this, however beyond mortal attainment perfection may be, obedience to the command is within reach, for surely its meaning is summed up in the spirit of trust that can pray—"Thy will, not mine, be done."—Hence, if I can in truth thus pray, my trust in Him will make it possible for His will to be done in me, and all that concerns me. Out of such a trust comes

the joy which reaps the fruit of the seeds sown with tears!—

It is strange how the outside Christian life is moulded from the inner life. But why do I call it strange when it is thus a tree grows? I see the beauty of leafage and bough, fruit and blossom, but the heart—the life—is within, and so it is with all growing things. Only cold, lifeless marble is moulded on the surface first.

How I have wandered from the shadow-pictures which were in my mind when I began to write, and yet I would fain always keep in remembrance the truth shadows teach—and as I am a disciple of the doctrine of “little things,” I am always glad Michael Angelo used a shadow to teach a lesson greater than any held even in his master works of art. I wonder did he know the eloquent message that would come rolling down the ages, because when at work he wore over his forehead, fastened on his artist’s cap, a lighted candle, in order that no shadow of himself might fall upon his work. Ah! if I can only keep the shadow of *self*

from falling on my work, then all is well—but when it does thus fall how in a minute it spoils the efforts of hours!——

When I left my journal this morning, I went for a walk with Alice and Madie. The path leading to the lake crosses the road, where on the shady bankside the wayfaring man still sat holding the cluster of bluebells. He looked up as we passed, and something in his glance told me those little flowers whispered to him, as they did to me, a message of God's Love.—A minute later we met the ragged urchin whose shadow was a mere span. He was not a stranger either to Alice or myself, and he came running toward us with the trustful confidence of a child, and with the same trust he put his soiled little hand into mine; for a moment I shrank from the touch of those little fingers, and then I looked at the child; poor little lad, he was so evidently neglected and unwonted to tenderness just a few kind words had won his heart; and from that wan, pitiful, almost baby face that was

uplifted toward me, because he knew a smile and not a frown would respond to his glance, I looked again at the insignificant, tiny shadow—it made only a patch of gray on the sunlit road.—And—What are shadows but symbols?—Hence I beheld in that patch of gray a type of myself. For I seemed to see my poor, sin-marred heart reflected on the bright, beautiful, all-pervading Light of the Heart of the Sinless One. And then I remembered how, for that brief second, I had held my hand back from the boy's clinging touch; and yet, when I reach my hands—my weak human hands, soiled by touch of earth, up toward the Christ, there is no turning away on His part, it is all 'Come'—"Come unto Me."—

When we returned from our walk Rob and Regie were no longer making shadow-pictures, but they were in the courtyard, and Regie was talking to himself with a child's unconsciousness of listeners. I was attracted by the sound of his happy laugh: it was so soft and full of an undefined peace, as though his

thought was of something beautiful. I could not refrain from asking: "What are you laughing at, dear little boy?"

"Oh, I's happy! I's thinkin' of some one I loves," he replied.

"Is it your dear mamma, or papa, or your brother?" I said—and again he answered:

"Some one higher up"—and as little Regie thus said, the sweet, low laugh gave place to a quiet smile.—"It's the angels," Rob exclaimed. But Regie shook his curly head as he looked up at the blue sky, and pointing toward it gently whispered, "No, it's some one I loves higher than the angels—it's Him who made the angels."——

These are only the words of a child who has not known a full half decade of earthly years; and yet how tenderly they bade me look up to Him, who, as Regie said, "made the angels"; and who makes, also, the Sunshine and Shadow pictures of which life is so full, and will be, till we go up There, where shadows flee away, and where "In the full sunshine of His smile" we shall "read earth's mystery right."

XI.

I AM glad Alice Fraser heard little Regie's words of child-like trust, for she has not entirely escaped the mist of speculation which so frequently environs Harry Griffin's and Mr. Forbes' conversation, and which has somewhat darkened the spiritual atmosphere of her earnest soul, now, when she is encountering the experiences that belong to a launch from school-life into the events linked with a before unknown contact with people and the world; as well as with unexpected agencies in her own heart and mind, and the introduction of new ideas, new points of view, and new perceptions of God and man. Despite this, her faith is so firm she is not afraid of discussion, as I realized during a conversation she had with Harry Griffin regarding the miraculous and supernatural. The talk occurred as we were returning from a mountain ramble.

To keep step with Bertie's slower tread, Alice, Harry, and myself had loitered, which somewhat interfered with the usual arrangement of companionship. But the others were not far in advance, and the sounds of laughter and conversation, with an echo of happiness in it, came back to us, wafted by the evening breeze. It was one of those ideal hours that only come now and then. The sunset glory was fading, but the stars were beginning to twinkle overhead, while the high Alps—those mysterious mountain-peaks—seemed in the softened light merged into the blue Heavens, and, somehow, I felt if I could but climb to their topmost summit Heaven's Gate would open for me too. But twilight deepened. I was in the valley, only the mountain-peaks held the unquenched light of the upper life and earnest of another day.—

There had been a shower just before sundown which had refreshed the dusty road. You know that odor of rain on the dust, and how it blends with the sweet fragrance of meadows and wayside fields, that give out so

lavishly their innermost balm and perfume of a June night. As I said, Harry and Alice talked of miracles, their possibility and impossibility, and all the time they were encompassed by the great unobserved miracle of Nature. It was of the raising of the little maid—Jairus' daughter—they spoke. Harry asserted that the incident was merely an acted parable, illustrated by a simple revival of vitality, that had been prostrated by the temporary suspension of physical power—a deep trance—a species of catalepsy, he called it. “But what object is there in this acted parable?” Alice asked, “unless it serves to enforce the truth of Resurrection life?” Harry used in reply the arguments familiar to readers and thinkers nowadays, but how empty they were before Bertie's reminder that “the so-called laws of nature,” with the existence of which Harry held miracles to be utterly impossible, are after all “only relations of force as they appear to our own minds; and we have no warrant for assuming that the subjective boundaries of our thoughts are the objective bound-

aries of God's thoughts." "And how do we know," Bertie asked, "'but that the miracles which seem contrary to some few laws of nature as known to us may be parts of some great fixed order of causes unknown to us?'" —As neither Harry nor Alice replied, Bertie continued: "'Besides, scientific men themselves allow that there have been three breaks of continuity in the history of the universe—the creation of matter, the production of life, and the formation of man.—No forces or operations such as we see before us can account for these phenomena.'" Bertie was never aggressive, and very gently he added: "'They may therefore fairly be regarded as avenues leading up into the unseen, and as laying the foundations upon which all the acts of interference with the established order of things—all the breaks of continuity recorded in Scripture—may be based.'"——

As Bertie ceased speaking I felt one of the opportunities I so desire had come, when, without seeming to preach, I could dwell on the power, greater than any human wisdom,

the law deeper than any physical law, and which from the altitude of Infinity sweeps down and enfolds the child-like heart of faith, in response to the slightest, most timid touch of the hem of His garment of Glory and Love. And yet, as I told Harry and Alice, "Reason cannot find Him, His presence cannot be proved, but when argument fails, action conquers. Do right and you will be right," I urged; and Alice caught my meaning, for she said, "I suppose by doing one becomes in a certain way a part of the Truth," and she softly added, "No one can see the Truth even in part without loving it."

XII.

I COME now to days and weeks during which I left this record unwritten, but in telling the story of our onward way, I will resume my narrative where I wrote the last page, and that was at Geneva, where we made a long enough stay, for its Lake to become our friend; and I was not the only one to whom the deep restful blue of its transparent waters seemed like a Heaven below, smiling at the Heaven above, for one of life's golden hours came to Alice Fraser those days. And yet, despite Mrs. Howland's warning, my soul was so absorbed drinking in the surrounding beauty, I did not observe the foreshadowing events which, had I noted them, would have hinted this to me. But after all—even had I observed those signs, could I have prevented Alice from loving?—and love—it is such a beautiful thing, would I have prevented it even if I could?—I did not think so when she told me of her hap-

py secret, though I did wish the winner of her heart had not been Stephen Forbes. Still, for the time, my distrust of him had somewhat abated, and being—as far as he was capable—in love with Alice, he was at his best those weeks. But even then, his epicurean cynicism, his cold mocking view of life, repelled me. I disliked also the way in which he spoke of religion in set phrases, and of God's service as a gorgeous ceremonial that pleased the fancy of women, but which was of no importance,—but enough of Mr. Forbes for the present.

Between leaving Geneva and my hearing Alice's story, there stretches a wide expanse of country and time, and enjoyment, marked by experiences that were beautiful as dreams, and which will continue to refresh my mind as long as I stay on earth—I think I will remember them in Heaven too, for surely we will there remember all the good and beautiful we have known here. But I must speed on with the story of our earthly journey, during which I garnered so many pleasant memories.—As I have said, it was the sweet sea-

son of the year, and the joy that reigned in Nature was echoed in the hearts of the young people, while the country through which we passed was peculiarly interesting, and in some places hallowed ground. We realized this before we reached La Tour. Even Harry Griffin felt the sacredness of that altar-place of Truth, and his step grew firmer, and the light in his eyes kindled as he looked toward the mountain sides which are dotted with the cottages of the Vaudois, and are still many of them, homes of the descendants of the brave men and women who clung so steadfastly to their faith, amid persecution and death.

I encounter a blank in my memory after Geneva and Turin. Then comes Genoa, the crescent city, which, as we caught our first sight of it, was like the sea, all aglow with the soft lingering radiance of sunset.

Next Milan and its Cathedral. How shall I describe it?—truly, I cannot, it is like a breath from the woods, an anthem when no voice is singing. It was at Milan, or rather while sail-

ing on the waters of Lake Como, that we beheld the first of the effulgent Italian sunsets with which later on we became so familiar. We stayed a full week in that region of loveliness, and we halted for a week also, on the shores of Lake de Garda. It is a place dearer to me than its sister, Lake Maggiore. It is more companionable, because smaller, and there is such a charm in the sharp contrasts of the surrounding scenery. The mountains to the north are so dark, broken, and wild, as they extend down to the water's edge, while the southern hills are so smiling, beautiful, and gay.

I was soothed by all this, and I was sorry when the time came for our departure. And yet, it was morning when we started, and our way led through a country like a garden for beauty. We lingered at Verona for the young folk to visit Juliet's tomb, from which each of the girls gathered a memento, that in a certain way was an index to their individuality. Edith's was a wild rose, sweet and blushing like herself—Madie's a yellow king-cup, bright

as sunshine. Alice found a little clump of grass-blades, for she is always on the watch for essentials, or their types. Is she not in the world to help others?—That is the thought behind so many of her seemingly simple actions; and think of all the comfort and help suggested by grass-blades! This desire to serve and be of use, is so a part of Alice Fraser's character; Harry Griffin often said he believed it bounded her idea of political economy. How strange that a cold-hearted man like Mr. Forbes should have won the love of such a maiden, for her heart is a deep well of affection, though she is so reserved in manner often it finds expression only by her loving and constant care-taking for others.

XIII.

I SAID I would avoid detail, so I leave untold the story of our onward way till a time when pleasure and wonder were tinged with a half-subdued interest, so novel and enchanting is the first impression of Venice. It was morning when we arrived, and the succeeding hours of the day were rich in visions of beauty and art, in which "luxury of architectural grandeur and grace are blended with painting and sculpture and many-colored marbles; pillars of lapis-lazuli; columns of Egyptian porphyry and pavements of mosaic; altars of alabaster ascended by steps inlaid with agate and jasper." But I turn from all this to the hour when I sat on the balcony of our hotel, languidly turning the pages of a worn copy of Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," and watching at the same time the new and strange scene surrounding me. The others—except

Bertie and Alice, who were busy with letters—had gone with Mrs. Howland for, as Madie said, “a gondola voyage in the gloaming.” Left thus alone, the poetry and the romance of beautiful, sad Venice, and the silence of the still city, stole over me almost unconsciously. There was something so strange and solemn in the hush, I was glad when the vesper-bells began to chime their summons to even-song. I do not know quite what I had expected to feel, but I was unprepared for the pervading spirit of decadence; even amidst the beauty I seemed to *feel* decay, like a sigh in the midst of smiles. I think it was the recognition of this that made many sensations rush together, and in among them memory linked my past with the present. Yes—suddenly I saw myself again in the bloom of early life; I seemed to hear Jack’s long-silent voice, and I felt a quick heart-leap of gladness, that his eyes were satisfied with me—and then—I remembered the present!—I remembered the change the years had wrought—and—it only takes a minute to make a rebel against the

years. But what right have I to resent their work? Had I not wanted to grow old, wanted time to pass after he left me!

I was roused from this reverie by the low murmur of Bertie Griffin's voice, and what he was saying decided Alice to tell without delay of her love for Stephen Forbes, and his professed devotion to her. It was a well-chosen hour for such a confidence, twilight was nearing, and in the sheltered nook where I sat, shadows were already beginning to deepen into that half-revealing, half-concealing light which makes it easier for a reserved nature like hers to tell a heart-story. As she joined me, there was a quiet shyness in her manner charming beyond words; and her large eyes had a far-out-look and a depth of expression I had not seen in them before. She leaned her head against the marble column which supported the arch that framed her graceful figure, and she stood clearly defined against the background of shining light that flooded from the west in a path of sunset glory down the opening of the canal, and which made the

shadows surrounding me all the more pronounced. Alice told her story in a voice which was soft and low as the rippling of waves on a sandy shore, and yet every word was clear as the notes of the Angelus bell. I felt it was thus her voice would sound if heard in prayer, while the look in her eyes was like a gaze kindled by Heavenward aspirations—and yet—oh the pity of it—she spoke of a man to whom the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Christ, were as idle tales.

Her words were simple and not over-many. I loved her better for her repression. She said: "Suddenly I found God has made our natures such that before they are enriched by a mighty love they only half grow and expand, but when thus loved—oh, Miss Annie, how they bud and blossom!" and her face was a tender sparkle of a smile as with more of sudden action than I had ever seen in her she knelt down by my side and rested her head on my knee. I laid my hand on her bowed head in tender caress, but I said no

word ; I waited for her to tell little or much according to her own sweet will.

When she spoke she used for the ending of her story the metaphor with which she began it, saying: "Do you remember how as we ascended the Jura we found mosses clinging to hard, dry rocks that did not love them; but they were only mosses, not all 'gushing out with the joy and filled with the happiness the little flowers draw from the warm, passive earth that loves them; and so I think our hearts are warmed and strengthened in an active way by a love that may seem only passive." Were these words an unconscious hint of a certain coldness Alice had already discovered on the part of her lover? I tried to banish that thought, but it haunted me as I kissed the sweet face lifted to mine in response to my whispered blessing. After that she told me just the commonplace details of when and where the engagement had taken place,—and then—a long silence followed.

In fact, I had but little to say ; an unmarried woman is not the one to warn of the pos-

sible reefs and breakers which may wreck the happiness of wedded life. I am also a firm believer in marriage as the highest and best life for a woman, even though it may contain some discordant elements. Nevertheless many an unmarried woman has filled as wide a sphere of usefulness; and always the unmarried must be the ones who know the most of tranquil happiness. Still, I repeat, I believe in marriage,—or love, with marriage looked forward to,—as necessary to the full rounding out of womanly character, and I have always been thankful even though it was so sadly brief in earthly continuance, that I had the beautiful, blessed experience of knowing the love of a true man's soul. I am thankful, too, Jack and I made the plans we did for life and work together; for they gave me a broader outlook than I could have gained alone, and they helped me to be more fearless in thought, and that has led to a firmer grasp of Truth, which always helps one to be, I think, less hypercritical, and less hypocritical, too!

An experience like mine, which has no un-

real imagining element in it, places a woman also, so on an equal footing with other women who are happy in wedded life. Yes—I know something of what such happiness means, and this gives me an added power of sympathy not only with joy, but with sorrow. Sometimes when it enables me to come close to breaking hearts, I almost thank God for the agony and wrench of separation which I have known, just because that knowledge helps me to comfort others. But—it is only an “*almost*” thank God to which I attain—I never am really quite thankful for that grief—— But with no *almost* I can give thanks for the joy of my happy time—oh! I am so grateful for, and so glad I had those months—and for their sequel I can wait—and I think—yes—I know the “afterward” will compensate for the present.—Yet—the waiting is very lonely—very desolate—days sometimes just creep; time sometimes flies on wings so clipped, verily they seem broken and unable to soar. But hard as it is, the parting, caused by what we call death, is like a peaceful song, when

contrasted with the bitter moan of an estrangement caused by what is termed a "living sorrow."

As I listened to Alice the fear of such an estrangement stole into my heart like a sad foreboding. I wondered, too, how she would endure the fret and friction of daily life, when it touched her through a second self, as it were, her eyes, ears, hands, and heart feeling for another, and sensitive to their passing emotions, as a wind-flower to the lightest breeze of spring. But I had little time to forecast Alice's future, for when she left me Bertie Griffin took her place, and the story he had to tell interested me tenderly. It is singular how experiences freighted with life-lasting memories come thus, without preface, and in the midst of quite ordinary circumstances. It was natural that the day of our arrival at Venice I was tired, and chose to sit alone on the balcony overhanging the canal, watching in the deepening twilight the long line of palaces fade into formless masses of architecture, while gondolas glided to-and fro,

their gleaming lights reflected on the water. And yet, how much that hour brought me! For when we love we live in the joy and sorrow of our dear ones. And I love Alice Fraser and Bertie Griffin—and Alice told me of a joy and Bertie of a sorrow.

XIV.

BERTIE greeted me by asking: "Is the law inevitable that if you do a foolish thing you must suffer for it, whatever your motive?"

I hesitated before answering, for I knew beneath the query was the earnestness that marks so many of Bertie's words. There was also a note in his voice which made me feel some unusual experience had disturbed the wonted tranquillity of his soul, and I dreaded trouble for him. In fact, I always feel he needs no other discipline than that which he constantly endures through the limitations imposed by his physical affliction. He was only two years old when the accident occurred which left him, not only with a deformed body, but a semi-invalid for life. And to me such a trial so bravely endured seemed enough to perfect and develop character. But I

was mistaken, and unmindful of the truth, that while the trial caused by physical weakness may have accomplished its appointed work and perfected the grace of submission, the development of other virtues may demand a different discipline, and the Heavenly Father will send it as required.

As is apt to be the case when deformity of the spine is the result of an injury received in early childhood, Bertie's face while deeply melancholy is most sweet in expression, and every feature tells of strength of will and earnestness of purpose. He has been carefully educated, and that means not over-educated for his intellect, and by nature he is singularly unselfish; thus it happens even those who know him most intimately have come to feel that he is, in a certain way, indifferent to the fact that he is set apart from many of the hopes and pleasures of young men of his age, culture, and social position. And I confess I was unprepared for his story, and the announcement that he loved Alice Fraser. The strength of his devotion had deter-

mined him to conceal it from Alice. But silence became impossible when he discovered her affection for a man unworthy as Stephen Forbes. But he only meant to warn her, he did not intend to plead his own love; and yet, before he fully considered where that warning was leading, it was mingled with a declaration of his own feelings.

The warning Alice straightway resented, and so hot was her indignation she paid no heed to Bertie's mention of himself, and I must think she only half understood his broken words. I can only thus account for her indifference, for Alice has a tender heart; I never knew her to wilfully hurt even an insect.

Bertie told me his story briefly; as he ended he said, "I would give my life to make her happy, and if Stephen Forbes could, or would do it, I would not begrudge him the joy—but he will break her heart."—And Herbert Griffin sobbed like a hurt child, though he is brave as a lion, and had never been known to flinch

at bodily pain however keen. By those sobs, I knew the strength of the new trial that has come to test his courage and faith, and to more highly perfect his already fine character by proving what manner of man he is. Why do I grieve over this, when such crucial testing never destroys anything truly noble, any more than it crushes out nature? I think as a middle-aged comforter I am to recognize this, and then to help Bertie to draw all the strength possible from it, and the truth linked with it, which is, that God does not require us in our sorrow to be anything but our natural selves. "The Bible calls pain an evil; it may be sent by God to do us good, but no sophistry can make the heart-ache in itself a joy. We cannot rejoice in tribulation itself, though we may rejoice in God through tribulation."

As was to be expected, in a nature like Bertie's, before he left me he had regained his outward composure; nevertheless there was a heart-breaking note of sadness in his voice as he said: "Never mind, Miss Annie, there

must always be joys other men have that will be denied me—but—patience,” and his dear eyes kindled with Heaven-born light as he repeated the staff-like lines by which Robert Browning has helped so many brave souls over rough places:

“All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good,
shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself.

.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,

The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the
sky

Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once; we shall hear it by
and by,

And what is our failure but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days?

.

Why rushed the discord in, but that harmony should
be prized?

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear.

Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal
and the woe;

But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the
ear.”

The enthusiasm which thrilled in Bertie's

voice, and glowed in his beaming countenance as he ceased speaking, told me he had laid hold of the enthusiasm of life which is awakened by a profound sense of God and duty, and is no sudden impulse.

As he bade me good-night he said: "Remember this experience will help me to regard this world not as Home, but only as a pathway toward *Home*."—And though twilight had deepened into darkness, while he had been talking, I knew the sun was shining in Bertie's soul again, for he added, "And after all, what is time here but the shadow cast by eternity!—And happiness, what a strange thing it is! It draws thoughts so away from self that we are hardly conscious that we have had it till it has passed." After a minute he added: "The memory of happiness I suppose will be something akin to the pleasure which a letter gives, as it grows more and more precious the farther off from home and friends one may be; so this summer, and the gladness it has held, will serve to pick up fragrance and flowers on its long journey

through the future years of my life.”—“Think of this, and do not feel too sorry for me, Miss Annie,” he half whispered, “for when memory brings it back, it will come like a child from a walk through green meadows, and by quiet water-brooks, and it will reflect a glow that will cheer even lonely hours.”

XV.

AFTER hearing Alice and Bertie's stories, my enjoyment of our trip began to cloud. My regret over Alice's engagement is greatly increased by Harry Griffin's and Mr. Howland's disapproval. "Stephen Forbes' cold self-assertion will kill the life out of her in a year," Harry declared, and I could not say "No" to his fear, for I too think Mr. Forbes a selfish man and "married to his habit of self-pleasing." Meanwhile, Bertie is keenly alive to the blighting influence he will exert over Alice's sensitive nature and delicate conscience. Bertie feels she can have neither mental nor spiritual sympathy with a man who does not believe in God, and who is indifferent to the destruction of faith and hope in the soul. "If intellectual difference is apt to cause wounds between those who love, how much deeper they will be when there is an unintellectual sentiment behind them," he said.

He did not mean that there was any lack of intellectual power on the part of Alice, it was simply the matter of belief and unbelief to which he referred. Mr. Howland's displeasure centred on the concealment of the engagement even for a few weeks—he refuses to excuse Mr. Forbes, and he is inclined to blame Alice. But I do not, for to a woman, and especially to a reserved nature, there is always a certain sweetness in keeping a happy secret, as a joy, with which no one can interfere, even by congratulations. Then, too, when Alice told me, she was as open-hearted and transparent as a child. Loyalty to her determines me to try to view Mr. Forbes from her standpoint; and certainly, regarded in a merely intellectual way, he is an exceedingly interesting man. I never hear him talk on subjects connected with philosophy, language, art, or history without feeling this. And yet, in the midst of his most glowing descriptions of Poet or Painter, Art or Nature, the thought will come to me, that all this is powerless to smooth the rough places one must encounter

in life. For—how little language amounts to after all! And how soon all languages will be one; and philosophy, at best, is a narrow boundary, for it does not include religion.

I said this to Bertie Griffin, and he replied, with a smile: "But religion includes philosophy." Still he did not say "Nay," when I answered, even if it did, I was content to stay in the green pastures of my present simple faith, without seeking to turn back to test my skill in climbing into them over the high wall—philosophy. The look of earnestness increased on his expressive face as I added: "While thus content for myself I could but remind him, Harry and Frank of the glorious field opened to some strong man to show those who say, 'Here is the boundary, philosophy can go no farther, and therefore not men,' that over and beyond is still another region."

Madie heard the words—she was just stepping with easy grace into the gondola in which we were starting, to enjoy what she called "the poetry of motion."—Half impatiently she said: "Dear Miss Annie, why perplex

our minds with such subjects. What do they amount to, it is all over soon."

I knew by that *all* Madie meant life and its earnest purpose—and truly her words belong to a sluggard and a dreamer as much as to a laborer. I remembered them as I looked at a photograph Mr. Howland has of the statue of David with his sling in the Villa Borghese at Rome. It so expresses the feeling I wanted to rouse in Harry and Frank—Bertie has it without any influence of mine—for his soul possesses the self-reliance as well as dependence on God which are the traits so remarkably brought out in this statue. I refer to the one in which David looks so determined to do his part, and trust God for the result. There is something very grand in it. It gives also such a true idea, for surely God does not want us to feel He does everything, and all we have to do is to trust; surely the strength and courage that killed Goliath was David's own strength and courage—his—because God offered it to him when he needed and asked for it, and he *used* it, thus making it his own. It

is so easy to confuse liberty and independence in the spiritual life, and yet I so want to make the difference between them plain to my young companions. Robertson defines it by saying that "liberty bows to the *I ought* ; independence to the law *I will*."

I was interrupted just here, and the thought that now fills my mind is, Why has Madie Leigh suddenly appeared almost in a new character during our stay in Venice? We have all yielded to her leadership from the hour of our arrival, for Venice has been Madie's dream of delight from the day we sailed from America till we entered the square of St. Mark's. And it is not her queenship or her enjoyment that disturbs me, but the contradictory spirit which is unlike the bright, sunny temper which has made her sweet and winsome. I can hardly define the change, it is so subtle and yet so evident. She revels in the surrounding beauty, but she is petulant with the objects which disappoint her. She complains over the poverty of the people, and almost at the same moment expresses delight at their

picturesqueness; she frets over the odors of the narrow canals at low tide, and yet is eager to glide over their waters; she will have nothing to do with the dismal, black gondolas, with their little dusky hoods and room enough for but two, nevertheless she is not satisfied with the most gaily decorated of the open ones; she even calls Mrs. Howland's special favorite—a gondola with steel-crested prow and decked with bright ribbons—"a tawdry thing that suggests some long faded beauty striving to hide the traces of time and change behind the glitter of fluttering drapery." All this variety gives a piquant charm to Madie's fresh young beauty—remember, her age is only eighteen—but what does it mean? That she is swayed by moods, I feel sure; for this morning, when I came upon her suddenly, her eyes were full of tears, and tears to a nature like hers mean moods rather than real trial.

Mr. Howland, though he seems so unobserving, has given me a hint of Madie's trouble; for the other day, when she was unusually full of airy whims and freaks of petu-

lant wilfulness, he said, "Poor little birdling, she is singing to an indifferent listener," and his gaze rested on Harry, who was talking with Edith.

Can it be that I am to encounter another love-tale here in Venice?—And is it possible that Madie really cares for Harry Griffin? The mere suggestion of this idea so disturbed me, I tried to banish it by asking Bertie to go with me for a farewell visit to St. Mark's. I never can forget that visit. It was a day consecrated by the Roman Catholics to the memory of the dead, and the vast church was hung with black, the flowers all removed. Masses were being said at the principal altars, and as we entered we met crowds of people all looking solemn and devout. Even strong men were weeping, and women without number. Somehow the scene laid hold of me like a powerful hand-clasp, and in a moment my heart was in sympathy with those mourners—for I know the meaning of sorrow—and I, too, whispered a prayer for my departed, for I believe it is

“ thus we meet,
And even thus we commune ! Spirits freed
And spirits fettered mingle, nor have need
To seek a common atmosphere, the air
Is meet for either in this olden, sweet
Primeval breathing of man’s spirit—Prayer ! ”

XVI.

VENICE is the very place to bring out Mr. Forbes' individuality, affording such rare opportunities for his anatomizing mind, which is always on the alert for objects to review and pick to pieces. I confided to Harry Griffin my fear that he would disenchant and dull the enthusiasm of our stay.

"No, he cannot do that," Harry replied; "'for where on the whole earth are stones eloquent as in Venice? Where is the creation of human hands that can be compared with this wondrous marble flower floating upon the surface of the sea?'"——

But, despite the truth of Harry's quotation, Stephen Forbes did chill the ardor of Alice's pleasure. I speedily detected this, though she endeavored to hide it behind a smile—that most transparent mask a high-toned, truth-loving woman can wear. Dear Alice, she is nobly lovely these days. This morning, at

the Manfrini Palace, I noticed how deeply impressed Mr. Forbes seemed by her gracious, sweet presence. I wonder what emotion stirred his heart as he looked at her? He has a well-trained eye, and is quick to admire a beautiful woman with much the same keenness of appreciation with which he estimates the merits of a work of art. He turned from a long study of a St. Cecilia, by Carlo Dolci, to watch Alice. She was unconscious of his gaze. She stood a little apart, absorbed in contemplation of the lifeless beauty of an Iphigenia by Correggio. I suppose in the history of every woman there is a time when her charm, whatever it may be, is at its height, and this was one of those supreme minutes in Alice Fraser's life. I think her beauty had never been so complete, and it was not so much beauty of form and countenance as of mind and soul. And she has plighted her troth to Stephen Forbes! Oh, the sting that knowledge gives me, and his voice made it all the sharper; for even in Alice's presence, and surrounded as we were by these marvellous pic-

tures, many of which represented human suffering and intense emotion—as the noblest works of art are wont to do—he was ready to turn from Alice to jest with Madie, and to enter into conversation with Mrs. Howland, and it abounded in sharp epigram and polite satire, which called forth laughter that echoed with a note of irony. And yet—Alice Fraser loves him! Alice, with her earnest reverence for all beautiful, sacred things; her tender heart; her guileless soul; truly, love among mortals may well be called a mystery.

In this instance the mystery consists in the wonder that Alice is not repelled by Mr. Forbes, not in the fact that she attracts him, that is perfectly natural; he is prone to analyze; half the zest of life consists for him in subtle investigations of men and things. And she is like a new discovery, and while the freshness lasts he is eager to observe every emotion that sways her sweet heart, and every revelation of her clear, well-regulated mind. She has also the rare gift of not speaking over-much, and this gives added zest to her words; and she

is able to speak with easy fluency, and a smile is wont to hover about her delicate mouth, while in manner she is as little conscious as a girl can be. Even when the color brightens her cheeks and flushes her fair brow, it is not from self-consciousness or confusion, but simply earnest feeling. In view of all this, as I said, it is easy to understand Mr. Forbes' admiration; but I cannot so readily understand why he seems often more in sympathy with Madie, and why frequently during these last weeks, even when Alice has looked grave, he has encouraged Madie's petulant fault-finding and half-bitter disparagement of the art and beauty with which the city abounds, till his influence more than once has made painting and sculpture voiceless to her; though, naturally, Madie is fond of color and form, and when we came to Venice she was eager to interpret the allegorical legends and historical subjects wrought in marble, and portrayed by color, with which the gorgeous palaces and churches are so full. But now, even Titian's "Assumption," before which Alice and Edith

stand with reverent awe, blended with wondering delight, Madie calls "tiresome." Indeed, she maintains looking at pictures is too exhausting to be ranked as a pleasure, "demanding as it does the re-adjusting the faculty both of intellectual and perceptive attention to a new focus." Hence she refused to accompany us to the Barberigo Palace, saying she felt "no interest in seeing the room in which a man ninety-nine years old painted," even though that man was Titian! After this refusal, Madie turned from Alice with a shrug of her graceful shoulders, as significant of weariness, as if she had been a French girl rather than the daughter of a well-ordered New England home. No wonder I am puzzled by the change in her.—"I am tired of admiring," she said; "my heart is tired of feeling," and for a second she glanced toward Harry Griffin, but he paid no heed either to the words or the glance. What influence swayed her?—

That to Mr. Forbes Venice is the Venice of the decadence, its ruling spirit the spirit of

decay, causes me no regret—but I am sorry to have Madie see its beauty clouded by the mist of her own conflicting moods, for they veil for her the interest and wonder of this sea city. I am glad Alice has quietly garnered memories that all her life long will gleam with the inner light history holds for a true soul, and which will vibrate with heart-beats of remembered poetry and beauty. Still there will be sorrowful memories linked with Venice, for so often Mr. Forbes has failed and disappointed her by his lack of sympathy. When I see them together, I realize that Alice is as far removed from her natural circle as a rose blossoming amid frost and snow, or a robin trying to sing in mid-winter when its song is the breath of spring. Sometimes I feel, too, a great dread, as though Alice was in danger of losing her own sweet individuality, just as she would be in danger of losing the dexterity of her right hand if it were caught in some crushing machinery. But when I feel thus depressed, hope comes to soothe me; and how much hope strengthens us all!—

XVII.

A GAIN I come to a place in this diary where for lack of space and time I must make use of the bridge of silence, and yet everywhere there is something to remember. Nevertheless my notes vary in interest, for places are like people, and the impression they make on the mind is equally difficult to explain. This is markedly so in my record of our journey on to Florence. Bologna, with what it may contain of the beautiful and interesting, suggests not a thought, while the mere name Ferrara makes my heart beat fast, as I recall Tasso's prison and its gloomy cell. But I will not enumerate places, for they are nothing when compared with the pictures Nature unfolded. I am glad we were encompassed by the scenery of the Apennines rather than that of the Alps. For the Alps have an

influence over me something like that exerted by the constant surprises of spring, while the Apennines are soothing like the repose that comes when spring is merged in summer. And being somewhat care-burdened for both Alice and Madie I need the calming of softer beauty, and the more luxuriant surroundings, of this country which is like a lovely poem; and each day I turn a fresh page, sometimes to find sight illustrated by sound,—I refer to the indefinable music which is Nature's way of talking, by rustling leaves, murmuring winds and rippling brooklets blended with the undertone melody of insect life. There is, too, the more intangible hush by which the ending day holds communion with twilight; all this, I repeat, is like remembered music, possessing the rhythm of harmony, in which music excels all other arts, while it is also the most romantic and poetic. I suppose this is the secret of its subtle power to evoke mental pictures, and yet how careless memory is in her grasp of music; how she lets it slip away—I wonder what becomes of the forgotten

melodies? Mrs. Howland laughed at my question, though she does not deny that sound helps us to secure memories, and that nature is replete with the twofold power of impressing beauty on the soul by the combination of sight with sound.

Thus these dark pine forests, with their openings into still more sombre glimpses of ravines, and woody glades, run parallel with the emotions stirred by thunder rolling among the hills, while the song of water-brooks, and rustling of leaves, and wind in the tree-tops, are the counterpart of the scene which stretched before us as by a sudden turn in the road we emerged from the forest, and beheld soft, sunny valleys, and peaceful hamlets. There were vine-clad eminences and rich pastures too, with here and there a convent half hidden by groves of cypress and cedar.

But the glory of the hours—which were so poem-like in their bountiful combining of beauty and brightness, gloom and mystery—was the one which gave from the summit of a lofty height a backward look over the whole

of Lombardy, which lay spread before us, a mystical landscape, where all was too indistinct for detail, at the same time brilliant and glowing with light that was intensified by vast impenetrable shadows. To the north like a range of fleecy clouds we could trace the skyline of the Alps, while far away to the eastward, a pale blue expanse of color marked the distant glimmer of the waters of the Adriatic.

It was twilight when we reached the inn where we were to tarry for the night. Bertie was so tired I began to realize the slight indisposition which had made him more than half an invalid for several days, held grave forebodement of serious illness. And yet he entered with even more than his wonted earnestness into the subjects that came up later in the evening for discussion. He spoke of himself also with a freedom that is not usual, for Bertie has a firm conviction that the best evidence of a Christian life is within, and that if it is there, it will find its way out, not so much by religious expressions, as by religious

living. And in ruling his life he makes it a principle not to talk about God's dealing with his soul, till he has thought about it, and got the good out of it, and even then he feels mere conversation will have no influence unless the life speaks through the words; he has also a wholesome dread of the sentimental in religion. I recall a talk he had with Alice, regarding the influence a Christian should exert over the young, that defines his views as clearly as the leaves and twigs of a tree-top are outlined against the blue sky. "Lead them into their own hearts," he said, "introduce Christian principles there—persuade them to take Christ Himself in, and then, when older, and skepticism comes armed with the weak fabric of empty thinking, it finds a living spirit within." It was this living spirit which shone in his words, as we sat on the broad balcony of the wayside inn watching the afterglow of the Italian sunset, in which deep purple, shadowy violet, and golden tints blended, in a delicious harmony of color.

XVIII.

IT was of the Hereafter we talked—Eternal hope and Eternal despair—the subject which will long be remembered by all classes as the topic of discussion in this and the by-gone decade. It was a somewhat strange topic when, save for Mr. and Mrs. Howland and myself, the members of our party were in the spring-time of life. Yet—why do I call it strange, when thought is like an echo, and there are wont thus to be subjects which at certain times control it. Periods, which seem set apart for especial discussion and upsetting of long-accepted opinions. While such periods centre among the earnest and more thoughtful, ripples from them reach even to the outer boundaries where the gay and careless congregate. History enforces this, and turning its pages we find thought epochs have their seasons as truly as spring

and autumn their equinoctial storms. What an interesting study it would be to follow this chain of thought through the centuries; noting how each has been marked by its own special subject, from the dawning of Christianity down to the present time. Think, also, how all culminate in the Christian theology which finds "in union with the Son of God we share His relations to the Father, and His eternal perfections and blessedness."

But I have wandered from Bertie and the hour when he so made us feel the repose of his spirit, which had nothing of inaction about it, for the peace encompassing him is full of power, and it makes itself felt as the outcome of many an experimental lesson and disappointment which have tended, because rightly used, to the enlargement of "the spiritual insight able to discover in the Present the seeds of the Future, and in the Seen the symbols of the Unseen."

As I said, it was of the blessed Unseen Bertie spoke, and it suggested the after-blessedness of Heavenly progress—the going on from

"height to height." And as unconsciously he gave us a clear image of what he was in spirit, he impressed also the truth that weak bodies are apt to make child-like souls, till even the natural eye looks more steadily *up* and the spiritual more steadily out. How unlike such a revelation of child-likeness is to childishness! And yet "often we mistake the one for the other, and in putting away childish things, as we think, part with the wrong elements, losing the heavenly insight, keeping the earthly darkness."

Later the conversation drifted on to God's recognition of our physical as well as our spiritual needs, and again Bertie was the chief speaker, and the one who brought out the truth that "the life of man is a unity, even though it touches the earth on one side and God on the other."

It was Harry who asked, "Did I think the development of Christian morality would suffer from the present devotion of Christian thought and energy to speculations on the nature of God in His relations to mankind?"

“ ‘Do you not think more would be done for morals if men cared less for theology?’ ” he added. Before I had time to reply, Mr. Forbes in his cold, critical voice was declaring the absurdity of expecting that truths far beyond the grasp of the masses can influence their lives.

Bertie responded by the reminder that “scientific discoveries which are only understood by the few, can yet change the organizations of great industries, and impoverish or enrich millions of men to whom the first principles of science are unknown.” He emphasized this by the fact that “philosophical speculations beyond the comprehension of the undisciplined intellect, have nevertheless been the origin of political and social revolutions.” “And we know,” he said, “ ‘if Christian revelation were really above the reach of the commonalty, it might still have power to produce beneficial results.’ ” After a moment Bertie added: “ ‘Not only it might, but it does have power, for the substance of the revelation is received by countless numbers of the un-

taught, to whom the technical terms necessary to define it have no meaning. But the mystery is verified in their personal experience, in the eternal love of God.'” Alice had not taken part in the conversation, but as Bertie ceased speaking she looked at him with one of her brilliant glances, saying: “But the intellect has a right to assert itself; we ought to be able to give an account of our belief, and if in the attempt to define it there is danger that the glory of the vision will be quenched, surely the effect would be mischievous; for ‘if there is a separation between faith and reasoned thought, will not faith become superstition?’”

“There is no such separation,” Bertie answered, “‘for the Holy Scripture is unexhausted and inexhaustible; and all later knowledge is a commentary which guides us further into the true understanding of prophets, apostles, and evangelists. And through old forms, old words, old thoughts—old and yet new—the Spirit of God speaks to us with a voice never before clearly intelligible as *we*

can hear it ; and it is our duty and our joy to ponder all that has been written for our learning, knowing that each mysterious character will grow luminous to the eye of faith.' ”

Stimulated by Bertie's example, in my stumbling, imperfect way, I strove to enforce his words by urging belief in the simple message of the Gospel, which we can all understand if we pray for grace to believe it.

Bertie responded, saying : “ ‘ Yes, our part is to look to Christ, to strive toward the end, to strive as those who have found the key of the great enigma of life, looking on all men as sharers with us of a nature which Christ has raised to Heaven ; looking on sin as that which only the Love of God could take away by taking it to Himself ; looking on the little duties and cares of each passing day as the elements out of which we are building an ilimitable future ; looking to Him as the One in whom is the promise and the power of unity, redemption, and perfection, which answers to the utmost wants of man and of the world.’ ”

Bertie was very weary after this long conversation, even more weary in spirit than in body, for he sighed deeply as the others began to talk on indifferent subjects, and yet he smiled as he turned to me and said: "What a destiny it is to fight wrong with *words*; still, I do know that words are but symbols of unknown forces, as the rustle of leaves are of a wind-power that prostrates strong trees and wrecks ships—but," and he sighed again as he added, "even though one knows all these true things, the difficulty is to use them when one passes through trial!"——

During the days that closely followed this conversation I was conscious that as Bertie's physical strength failed, his soul strengthened. Sentiment also deepened in his mind, and sentiment is the heart of religious life, for it is no more like sentimentality than health is like disease. I remember a Sunday when as I met him with the question, "Why have you not been to church?" his face lit up with won-

derful brightness as he replied, "I have been, for there is a church everywhere for a soul truly solemn in the presence of the Creator!" That same day he said to me, "Will it not be beautiful to go from earth to Heaven? To see the Truth, to know *how* and *why*, and laugh at all our former fears and doubts, laugh and wonder at them!" After a pause he said, "How many difficulties we find in the brain, while there are none in the heart, for if we set our minds on knowing what God will have us *to do*, He is sure to keep the heart full of peace."

XIX.

THERE had been no rapid increase in Bertie's illness, nevertheless it seemed wiser to hasten on to Florence, where we are comfortably settled for the month of November, in one of the many villas that are scattered so thickly on the heights which surround and look down on the city called "a pearl set in emerald."

The beauty of Nature, which he can enjoy without effort, has been the only tonic Bertie has needed since our arrival, and as the days wing away,—each new-comer more beautiful than its yesterday—he seems constantly to gain in strength. If it were not for Mr. Howland's anxiety, I would share Harry's confidence that all Bertie needed was rest, for already he is strong enough to join the early risers who watch for the blush of morning light as it illumines the hills, and then steals

softly downward to the valleys, where it meets and absorbs the mist in rosy radiance. Neither is he tired, when at noon-time all the landscape is flooded with sunshine ; and he hardly confesses to weariness when toward the ending of the day the wealth of golden brightness fades into violet tints that at last melt into the gloom of night. There have been days, too, when Bertie has been well enough to go among the pictures and sculpture of this beloved city of Art. At such times Alice is his guide. I am glad of their friendliness, and the proof it is of Bertie's self-mastery ; but I must not linger over these thoughts, neither must I tarry among the art-galleries, for other influences and associations linked with Florence stir Bertie's heart and mind more deeply. He is so eager to trace the resemblance—in many points—between this present time of conflicting opinions and rival religious systems, with that long-ago era when “the conflict between liberal culture and a more passionate form of Christian faith so reigned, and when the two in their most characteristic forms

struggled for pre-eminence over Florentines who had been educated into the half-pedantic and half-idealistic scholarship of Lorenzo de Medici, and faintly shared the new scientific impulses of the age of Columbus and Copernicus, and whose hearts and consciences were stirred by the preaching, political as well as spiritual, of one of the very greatest as well as earliest of the reformers, the Dominican friar Savonarola."

Verily no period could be found when "mingled faith and culture effervesced with more curious results," and none more rich in examples illustrating how the mysteries of the Gospel could control the hearts of men. These thoughts are full of mental stimulant to Bertie,—but dearer than the search for parallel lines of history; dearer than the contemplation of the pictures he loves; dearer than his wonder and delight over the marvels of sculpture and architecture, is his enjoyment of the beautiful world. And love of Nature always leads a devout soul on to love of God, for the love and appreciation

of God's earth is one part of the heart's recognition of Him. In this enjoyment, as well as in all others, Bertie seems endowed with new powers of appreciation and new perceptions of beauty. Everything conspires to increase this, even the weather, for it is a rarely fine season and the air continues as warm and the days as sunny as early September in America. And it is no wonder the brilliant purity of the skies, the sweet softness of the atmosphere, and the peculiar charm of the scenery are like healing balm to him.

Chief among these days of peaceful enjoyment will always rank in my memory a Sunday in Florence. It was nearing even-tide when we all met in the wide vestibule of the villa. The air was warm and sweet, and laden with fresh gladness and strength as the evening breeze wafted it in through the open door and windows. Mrs. Howland was the central figure of our group. She was dressed in what she deemed a fitting robe for the Sabbath—all unmindful of the fact that the Lord of the Sabbath linked the day with corn-fields and

the lowly lilies by which He taught, "Take no thought for raiment."——

Still, Mrs. Howland in her glossy satin and soft laces was a pleasant part of the scene. Her husband stood by her side, leaning his arm on the richly carved back of her crimson-cushioned chair. He, too, had laid aside his travelling costume, and was suitably attired for the sacred day in well-fitting broadcloth, the somberness of which was enlivened by a spray of wild geranium Edith had fastened in his button-hole. The folds of a heavily wrought tapestry, in which the colors had not yet faded, formed a picture-like background for Mr. and Mrs. Howland, and for Stephen Forbes, whom it partly concealed. He wore an ordinary every-day suit, and there was nothing to note in his appearance except the intensity of his gaze, which was fixed on Alice. I feel sure, as I remember that look, it was one of the hours when she roused all there was of good in him—and there was some good—as I think there is in every one—don't you? Alice reminded me of the even-

ing in Venice, for her tall, slender figure framed by the marble arch of an open window was clearly defined against the paling blue of the sky. She was simply dressed in a soft clinging fabric of white. She was lovely to look at, and like one who lived nearer to Heaven than the rest of us. Madie stood by her with hands clasped around Alice's arm, which rested on a ledge of the stonework of the portico, over which leafy tendrils of ivy grew in a wild tangle. Madie was radiant in apparel as a gay flower or tropical bird; her frock was of shimmering silk, and she was all a-flutter with rose-tinted ribbons and sparkling gems. Somehow she suggested a landscape, where golden corn and wheat-sheaves flash between shadow and shine. No wonder the rays of the setting sun played like a caress about her little figure. Frank Howland, as he looked at her, had much the air of a sentinel guarding a jewel; and this effect was added to by his standing at the foot of the divan on which Bertie reclined. Dear Bertie! I wondered what thoughts were hid-

den in the depths of his blue eyes. Their expression was a combination of faith and perplexity, while there was an unwonted puzzle of possibilities in their steady, calm *outlook*; but, when after a minute, it changed to an *upward* look, all the puzzle was gone. I turned from the study of Bertie's face to Edith. She was sitting on the broad threshold step of the marble stairway that led up from the garden terrace. Contrasted with Madie's gay, fluttering draperies, Edith looked like a woodland flower, she was so sweet in her simplicity. Her dress was pale blue, and a soft white network woven of snowy wool, half hid the ripples of her wavy auburn hair, that, blown by the wind, had escaped from the confining ribbon—also blue—which held it back from her open brow. She smiled as Harry dropped, one by one, a great cluster of roses into her dimpled hands, which were clasped into a basket-like receptacle. As for Harry, he was the noblest figure of our group. What of myself—do you ask? I am always a little woman in black.

XX.

I HAVE neglected to record that Edith Howland is very happy these days ; like Alice, during the by-gone summer she touched the heart of life, and love—the word so brief, so dear—has made high morning in her soul. She is sweet and tender in her joy as June is sweet and tender among the months, and the question she asked that hour when we were surrounded by the hush of the Sabbath twilight was an outcome of her joy, and so was the blush that flushed her fair face as she said : “ Tell me, is happiness found in looking backward or forward ? ” There were different replies to Edith’s question ; some claimed that “ the joy of joy is anticipation,” others that “ memory is happiness.” In denial of this opinion Bertie gently remonstrated, saying, “ Life is before, behind is Death.”——“ Yes—Life is before,” he repeated.

Edith is not apt to be quick, still she straightway divined that Bertie had not caught the meaning of her query, and for a minute, the being thus brought into the presence of a wider outreach than her question intended, fell like a shadow over the unclouded brightness of her heart. "Yes," she said, "but you are thinking, Bertie, of the endless Life of Heaven, while I had in mind only the happy present." "Would it be a happy present without that future?" Bertie rejoined, and he looked toward me, for he knows how dear I hold the hope of Heaven and its reunions. At Bertie's words Alice asked, in the half shy way with which she sometimes speaks of grave subjects, "What do you mean, Bertie, by Eternal Life and Eternal Death?"——

I rather dreaded the discussion I feared the question would rouse, but there was no cause for anxiety; no one interrupted Bertie as he expressed his belief that the essence of Eternal despair will be that the lost will hate God because of their own self-made charac-

ters, their punishment being the endless jarring of their souls with God's laws, and their sickening at the good and at the God from the sight of which and Whom there is no escape. Bertie portrayed this despair so vividly his words seemed prophetic, but it was not only a dread future he depicted,—no, indeed, for very gently he ended the conversation, saying, "Though personally I believe in Future punishment, I would fain open the gates of Heaven here, rather than of Hell there!"—and how wide he did open them!

Listening to his words, truly I felt his weakness and illness were sent to lead us, his companions, close to the Heavenly City for something more than warning. I feel too, that while he may not rise from it for a long stay on earth, we who know him will rise with power wider, richer, and fuller for the duties of life, because like Lazarus, we have received unspoken and unspeakable impressions of the Beyond.

XXI.

THE days between that Sunday and our departure from Florence sped away quickly. We started on the journey toward Rome in the early morning; so early we saw the sun rise. The sky was cloudless, and earth a smile of joy, for though it is the winter of the year, wintry weather has not yet robbed the beauty from the wooded hills and valleys. The road we travelled offers constant opportunity for the study of character, for the beauty of nature combined with historical, poetic, and artistic associations can hardly fail to bring out what is in people. This was peculiarly so in Mr. Forbes' case, and his critical, analytical spirit was on the alert as it has not been since we left Venice. Ruthlessly he put to flight our topographical knowledge, while scarcely an object which called forth our enthusiasm escaped his sharp satire. I know Alice was wounded by this, for I love her, and love is quick to observe and feel for

the loved one. There was, too, almost a supplicating expression in her eyes, when, as we parted for the night, she lingered to whisper—"Please do not let me drift away from you, Miss Annie."——

I do not think she quite realized the emotion which prompted the words, but I understood all too well their foreshadowing of disappointment in the future her young heart had pictured as bright, beautiful, and satisfying. Would the full realization of that disappointment come suddenly to her I wondered, as the hiding of the blue sky came to us—for just between daylight and dark—of the day before we reached Rome—heavy clouds gathered, and at midnight they opened and rain fell in torrents, and when morning came the landscape was hidden by a chill mist. Perhaps it was this sudden break in the weather, perhaps he has overtaxed his strength, that has caused Bertie to fail rapidly this last week, and I realize the relapse, Mr. Howland anticipated, has come. And yet, now that the storm is over the days are so

beautiful, so brilliant, so cloudless, he is bright and cheerful and able to enjoy Nature's loveliness, while he is always ready with a smile to speed our going out or to welcome our return. Nevertheless, though God's book of Nature is sunlit—and Art is learned in that book—the true deep meaning of both Art and Nature can only be read by an inner light, and that light is being kindled for more than one of our party, not by watching the cross of St. Peter's glittering in the sunshine, or the ruins of the Coliseum shining in the glow of silvery moonlight; not by minds awed by architectural grandeur and magnificence; hearts softened by revelations of color and form; not by fervor stirred by the sight of martyr's tomb, falling pillars and crumbling arches.—No, all these are as nothing before the illuminating of the "still small voice" that is summoning a soul from the limitations of a weak, deformed body to the freedom that

"Walks in soft white light with kings and priests
abroad,
And summers high in bliss upon the hills of God."

XXII.

AS I watch Bertie's failing strength I feel I have come to another mile-stone in my soul's life, for it is not years but joys and sorrows that thus mark our histories, and Bertie's departure will be a great sorrow to me. I am saddened, too, because I cannot bid him tell my dear ones in Heaven that my spiritual life since they left me has been all Upward; for alas! many a time I have lingered in the valley rather than climb the uphill path, even though so well I know it leads on to the breezy mountain-tops of faith. Will I ever reach their summit? Will I come at last to Mount Zion? But why do I say at *last* when the promise reads, not we shall come, but "*we are* come unto Mount Zion and unto the City of the Living God, the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant."——

How wonderful this promise is; it is like a hope fresh as dewy fields, or a breath of warm sweet air, — “*are come*,” there is no hesitancy in the assurance. And yet, have I come to this glorious fellowship, is it really mine for now? The thought that it is makes it so precious, for I can grasp what belongs to life’s every-dayness with a restful hope thoughts of the future cannot give, because the future always seems somewhat remote and indefinite, however dear it may be. I wonder why I tarry so behind Jack’s faith in the Unseen. To him it was so real, made real because he lived in a constant belief in its nearness. For while some might have called Jack an idealizing person, there was nothing visionary in his faith, that was firm as a rock, and radiated from the Cross. It was inwrought also with a practical common sense which was strengthened, not weakened, by the consciousness of life’s on-reach from the seen to the unseen. And even if he was ideal, “the ideal is not the creation but the gradual discovery of the human intellect; the ideal is not

within but beyond us, and supreme over us." To become worthy of that beyond was Jack's aim, therefore he regarded human life as a mission, "the mission of realizing the aim; and it consisted in incessant activity upon the path toward it, and a constant struggle against the obstacles which obstruct the onward path." It was the deep, profound feeling of this that made him so earnest in his plans for work here on earth. And how those plans were sanctified by his conviction that in Christ we are all members one of another, and this exalted existence and gladdened it, for because of this union in Christ Jack was able to share in the joys and sorrows of others.

But I must not linger over these memories, even though the turning back to the by-gone pages of my heart's book, on which his influence is traced, always opens for me fresh outlooks of thought and aspiration, which never fail to help me solve the problems of hope and disappointment, success and failure, sunshine and shadow, which enshroud earthly life. For

Jack's key to life's mystery was, "*God loves*" and "*He knows,*" and He has promised, "I will give the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which called thee by thy name, am God."

XXIII.

IT was Christmas eve when we noticed a sudden change in Bertie. And yet Christmas morning he was bright, though with a calm subdued brightness, more like twilight than morning. He talked of his father and mother. He asked Harry to push his couch into the sunshine, which came streaming in through the uncurtained window. He smiled when Alice came softly to his side, and he reached out his thin weak hand for the Christmas rose she brought him, and he held it all day—and afterward.

Yes—all through the morning Bertie was comfortable; his mind clear and unclouded. One minute he talked with almost joy of “going home”—before nightfall we knew the Home he meant—the next he entered into some passing event with all his wonted keenness. In response to the doctor’s re-

peated inquiry—"Did he suffer?" he always made the same reply—"No pain—only I am tired—so tired."

It was noon-time when I observed a before unknown look on his face—I knew then silence and mystery were very near.—After that he spoke but little, and that was all of God's Love—Christ's nearness—except once, when he whispered to Harry: "Stay by me to the end."—And Harry did.

But why dwell on these details? Why tell of weeping? The simple fact is enough, Bertie left us.—God loved him, God called him, God gave him eternal youth and immortality.

It was over in a minute—one struggle—then peace.—"For he being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time. His soul pleased the Lord. Therefore He hastened to take him."

"Speak only of departure, not of death ;

.

O say not that long life

Is measured by arithmetic

.

Longest is that existence, which though
 brief,
Has shone for God, and left in legacy
A trail of holy light. He measures us
By deeds, and not by periods ; not by beat
Of pulse, or swing of pendulum, or years.
Goodness is life, with holy memories
And lofty aspirations, which survive
The shadows of the tomb."

XXIV.

HOW strange it is, this going Home! Bertie started so much behind me in the Christian life, and yet, he has gone, and I am left. He has dropped off the weary load of sin and sorrow; "he rests from his labors, and his works do follow him." I said these last words aloud as I stood looking down on the still form. Alice heard them, and softly she whispered, "And our work remains. What is it?" To comfort Harry, was my answering thought; but how could we comfort him?—

Poor Harry, he is bowed before the mystery, and the incomprehensibleness of dying to Live. And does Bertie live?—This question is too solemn and momentous to be pushed aside.—And oh, how empty, how cold, now in his hour of need, he finds the sophistry of the realistic school of thought, which before

his heart cried out for consolation had been as meat and drink to his intellect. How vain a merely humanized view of religion, now, when he is brought into contact through a personal loss, with the doctrine of Resurrection Life, which can only be satisfied by the Helper—the Man—human yet Divine. Acceptance of *this* satisfaction demands a self-mastery that will be hard for Harry Griffin to attain; he is proud, and the laying “his intellectual treasure at the low footstool of the Crucified,” will be prefaced by no slight mental conflict. And yet, it is only thus, and there, he can find the key of Faith, that opens the gate of Heaven to believers.

I never think of the word *key* in connection with spiritual things without remembering the saying of Origen—the early Church father—“The Saviour gives as many keys as there are virtues and requirements.” And how tenderly our Lord’s personal appearances after His Resurrection illustrated this, and how they revealed that it matters not how faith comes, provided we have it, for “He dealt with the

three greatest personal trials of men : bereavement, doubt, and sin." Hence "He manifested Himself through *Love*—as in the experience of Mary—through *Thought*, for the two disciples on the way to Emmaus were reasoning men—and through *Doubt*, as to Thomas."—But Harry refuses to be led by these guidings. Indeed all that helps him now is the memory of the realness of Bertie's faith; he said to me yesterday, "It was not opinion Bertie cared for, but faith."—"And he made that faith his," I replied, "by living up to it." We did not continue the conversation, but I am sure Bertie's influence will be a power working for good in Harry's soul; and such an influence always works in two ways, one strengthening the will, while the other strengthens the ideal. And already the expression of Harry's face indicates that he has encountered some mental experiences of greater insight than common, and that some new perception of thought is forcing itself upon his mind; and the first step toward the Light is to feel the Darkness, and he is feeling that now; while hitherto, I be-

lieve with him, as "in many cases, the reason why the doctrines of Grace so profoundly embedded in the Gospel are dispensed with by the negative writers and thinkers of the day, is because they have not fully had to feel the need of them ; because they have not travelled with St. Paul through the dark valley of agonizing conflict, or with Dante along the circles downward, and the hill upward ; because, having to bear a smaller share than others of the common curse and burden, they struggle and falter less beneath its weight."

I wish I could feel as easy regarding Madie Leigh's future as I do for Harry's, but I cannot, for her changing moods, I am more and more convinced, come from jealousy of Edith. It was a sudden expression I caught in Madie's tell-tale eyes that revealed this ; it was called forth by a word Harry used in speaking to Edith—yes—it was only a word, but the heart of love was folded in its meaning as a rose-leaf is folded in a rose. I cannot explain Madie's look, but it has made me feel that a certain sweet guilelessness has gone out of her soul.—

And yet, Madie's conscience is surely too fresh and tender for her to deliberately plan to come between Harry and Edith—and still she does it!—And she prevents me from remonstrating by a mixture of self-will and submission, reserve and confidence, which reminds me constantly of my undefined recognition when first she came under my care, that her character was full of possibilities and but half developed. I am sorely troubled also for Alice; she is so strong and steadfast in her attachments, though inclined, like all reserved people, to admit but few into the inner circle of her affections. Hence when she does love it is with the intensity of her nature, and like all her deepest feelings, a sacred emotion. This leads her to ennoble Stephen Forbes in her thoughts, while she attributes to him the excellence she desires to have him possess. And virtues are wont to partake of the soil that nourishes them; thus those with which Alice endows Mr. Forbes partake of her own high standard. The knowledge of this rouses my anxiety to the high-tide mark, for I re-

alize the awakening to his true character will be rendered doubly hard by it.

Every passing day also increases my wonderment over Alice's blindness, and his power to so kindle her imagination; she is usually so quick in all delicate instincts. But now, even when he disappoints her, she speedily finds some excuse, saying: "In time, if I am patient, we will think alike; he will lift me nearer to his intellectual level, and I will try to help him to look from the finite to the Infinite, from the seen to the Unseen."

I know Alice is firm in all matters involving principle, but I am disturbed by the subtle way in which Mr. Forbes gratifies his desire for analysis and investigation of mental processes by striving to dim her Heavenward vision, and by efforts to undermine her trust in the Fatherhood of God. He tries, too, to see how far he can put the world into her heart. It is a cruel pastime, but men who have no faith in God are wont to be selfish.

XXV.

THE last month has been a most unsatisfactory time to me. I find it hard to become reconciled to Bertie's departure. He was so young to go, and there is always something doubly sad in the closing of a dear opening life—something doubly mysterious in the call which bids a young soul pause on the threshold and stop there. No—not stop, when it goes as Bertie's soul has to the Home where "strength is renewed." This is such a blessed heritage for Bertie, he was so often tired when here on earth.

But it is of myself I began to write. I have tried to glean harvests of treasure-memories as I wander among the ancient and modern beauties with which Rome abounds. Yet I have been indifferent even when I beheld objects and scenes the mere thought of which,

formerly, caused a heart-leap. I will not dwell on these unsatisfactory attempts. You know all about such an experience, how it ends with a crash and general clearing out, an earnest prayer, and a fresh attack upon work, duty, and life. Last night I thus climaxed. I went to bed early, determined to start afresh this morning, and I did ; the old vigor, the old zest and interest returned. I was up and looking from my window a full hour before Alice and Madie were stirring. My first impression of this new day was of the beauty of dawn with its soft pearly hue. But before the sun had time to rise the clouds had become dark and lowering. How the wind blew—whistling and moaning around the overhanging eaves of this old Hotel, that once had been a Palace, and once a Prison!—I felt a longing to go out into the gray day ; a longing to have the wind whirl me about, and even to have the rain beat on me. Somehow I felt as though after the weeks of Italian sunshine this storm had come on swift wings from my distant home in rugged New England to shake and rouse me

into action.—I could almost hear the wind whisper, “Stir up, stir up.” It did me good. The old sluggishness left me and I felt the throb of contentment beating once more in my heart, because, though I can never feel the happiness I had when those I loved, and who formed part of my very life were with me, I can still strive to do life’s work.

I was thinking of this as I entered Mrs. Howland’s parlor, where, in deference to home custom, we were wont to all breakfast together. I was an hour before the usual time, but Mr. Howland was in advance of me. He was standing looking from the window out on the falling rain. I wondered if the patter of the drops beating against the glass had for him, as they had for me, a familiar home-like sound which made them pleasant as music. As he turned to greet me I saw at once that he had no thought of home, or music, for there was an expression of stern displeasure on his kindly face, and a severity in his voice that I never had heard before as he asked: “What do you know regarding Mr. Forbes and his past life?”

I had but little to say in reply, for my knowledge is bounded by the few facts Harry Griffin had told me when he introduced Stephen Forbes, and they were merely, that during his college life at Harvard, his record had been that of a fine scholar, with a good moral reputation, and that his parents were well-bred, well-educated people, his father an American by birth, his mother Scotch. Their means had been somewhat limited till within a few months of the time of their son Stephen's graduation, then, by the death of a brother, Mrs. Forbes had fallen heir to a large estate, which consisted principally of extensive carpet works located in Manchester, England, over which Stephen was appointed overseer. But with ample means at command his eager mind sought a stimulant the routine of business failed to supply. And his parents consented to his desire to spend several years at Oxford. It was there Harry met him, and from that time on till the present they had continued intellectual friends.

I was quite unprepared for Mr. Howland's

emotion as I told him this was the extent of my knowledge of Stephen Forbes—for with a bitter sigh he exclaimed, “And on this slight knowledge Alice Fraser has engaged herself to him.” And then, Mr. Howland was generous, he did not blame me; but he condemned himself harshly for having permitted Stephen Forbes to join our party merely because he was a friend of Harry Griffin, and an agreeable and scholarly man. After a brief silence he told me the cause of his present anxiety. He began the recital by defining Mr. Forbes’ mental and spiritual position from the time of his going to Oxford, where he speedily became known as a young American of unusual intellectual ability; and where he soon joined the class of thinkers who feel no hesitancy in destroying belief in the Bible and the supernatural; maintaining that “the essence of Christianity is not the possession of supernatural life from the love or the gift of a Supernatural Being, but simply the discovery and certain use of the wise heart.” But while Stephen Forbes ranked himself as a member

of this school of modern thought, the desire which ruled him, was unlike the earnest purpose of the men he professed to follow.

His object in seeking "New light," was simply a desire for the mental gratification a new thought afforded, and the zest it imparted to discussion. Hence the deeper phases of life which were foundation-stones to those with whom he associated escaped him, and while "they advocated noble conduct, and extolled the elation of duty and the rapture of righteousness," he magnified self, scorned duty, and mocked at righteousness. The natural bent of his mind was speculative; it was also of a stoical reasoning type, rather than religious and devout, and he had not been six months in Oxford before his early faith in revelation had gone, and with it his faith in God and immortality. And when he ceased to believe in God he soon drifted beyond moral restraint.—When Mr. Howland came to the conclusion of this part of Stephen Forbes' history, I thought the tale ended—but one glance at Mr. Howland's

face, told me there was another page to turn. Before he began it, he went again to the window, and looked out on the pouring rain, while he bade me listen to the wind. I knew this brief pause was to give me fresh courage for the coming history. And I had time to "Look Up," and it takes but a moment to speak to the Heavenly Father—and only a moment for Him to answer.

I will not attempt to repeat the exact words Mr. Howland used; in substance they were, that some time before Harry Griffin became acquainted with Stephen Forbes—he, Mr. Forbes, had won the love of a young girl as pure-minded and sweet-hearted as Alice Fraser. He had returned to Manchester after two years spent at Oxford, that he might make one more trial of business before he decided to follow a student's life. And it was then he saw Milicent Ward. She lived with her widowed mother in a simple cottage but redolent of English life. Roses clustered around the windows and porch, and wall-flowers

blossomed out of the thatched roof. Milicent's father was an artist, who, encouraged by one or two successful sky and landscapes, had married an orphan girl—the daughter of a North of England clergyman. But after one bright year, success deserted the young artist, and at the early age of twenty-six he died, calling his life a failure and leaving only a slender pittance for the support of his wife and child. She inherited enough of her father's love for color and form, to have attained by the time she was eighteen, a position as designer at the Manchester Carpet Works, and it was just then that Stephen Forbes returned to make his second trial of business. Milicent excelled in delicacy of combination and coloring, and life looked very bright to her; it is pitiful to think how he blighted that brightness. It is a commonplace story, with the slight variations of circumstance and surroundings. Mr. Forbes saw that which attracted him in Milicent's slight figure, cheerful air, quick light step, and blue English eyes; he heard that in her soft voice which won his fancy; he was

tired of study; business details bored him, he wanted a new sensation, and he found it in the society of this young girl. She was well read, and yet fresh in mind with ideas of her own and not borrowed from books. It was a brief love-making. Mr. Forbes had everything in his favor, and Mrs. Ward felt only pleasure over her daughter's engagement.

Three months of happiness followed, but autumn came and Stephen Forbes began to find the new life wearying, and owning no master higher than self, he called his engagement a summer-day idyl. And with no word of farewell he suddenly vanished from Milicent's life. She had an intense nature, but brave with the courage of a noble soul, and for her mother's sake she pushed her sorrow aside and resumed her work. But the mother, never strong, was unable to bear sorrow for her child; she belonged, too, to a people of settled principles who were ruled by good laws and this served to make Stephen Forbes' faithlessness and desertion of her Milicent a greater shock, and when the spring came

Milicent was an orphan. Circumstances connected with her mother's death and her peculiarly lonely position led to a more than formal acquaintance with Ralph Sterling, the newly appointed rector of St. Luke's, the largest of the parish churches in Manchester. Through his efforts Milicent secured a home as a companion to an old friend of his, a Mrs. Ann Gilbert. It has gone out of fashion to acknowledge Providence, but that is what I consider the fact that this Mr. Sterling was a former Oxford tutor of Harry Griffin. They had kept up during the years since they parted a somewhat irregular correspondence; thus it happened that Harry wrote Mr. Sterling, while we were in Venice, a letter which contained a bright, happy description of our life, but it arrived at a time when the hard-working rector had just returned from a scene that revealed a side of life so unlike Harry's verbal picture, that after a glance he put the letter aside to read later on, and then it was forgotten for weeks. But when word came of Bertie's death in Rome, Mr. Sterling re-

membered it, and being a man of orderly habits he found it in a pigeon-hole of his desk, where he had put it on the autumn day of its reception, and then, he read it, and on the mid-way page his attention was riveted by the mention of Stephen Forbes, and his engagement to Alice. "She is an orphan," Harry wrote, "an American and an heiress, and as sweet and noble a girl as ever walked the earth. I deeply regret the engagement, for while Forbes is a rare man intellectually, spiritually he is worse than a skeptic, and yields obedience to no aspiration higher than self-pleasing." After a page of similar items Harry referred to Mr. Howland as the guide and care-taker of our party. And thus it happened that Ralph Sterling wrote him of his suspicion that this Stephen Forbes was the man who had so cruelly trifled with Milicent Ward.

In response to this letter Mr. Howland made immediate efforts to gain information regarding Stephen Forbes' career. And the result is that yesterday Ralph Sterling ar-

rived in Rome, accompanied by his mother's trusted housekeeper and Milicent Ward. Had I been consulted I would not have arranged for thus disclosing Mr. Forbes' true character to Alice. But perhaps Mr. Howland is right, and the only way of convincing her of his treachery is by the presence of his former betrothed; and certainly I agree with Mr. Howland that Alice must be saved from marriage with this heartless, unprincipled man. I am deeply grateful also for Mr. Sterling's disinterested kindness. And what a proof it is that loyalty to the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens," is no fable of sentiment or fiction, but a real living principle among every-day men and women in this every-day world, *if* God is their recognized Father, Christ their Exemplar, Faith their shield, and Charity their staff. Verily we sorely need such an anchor of Christian *unselfishness* in the presence of Stephen Forbes' un-Christian *all-selfishness*.

XXVI.

FEW experiences are more bewildering than the power we human beings have of meeting emergencies with outward composure. In spite of his anxiety, Mr. Howland had himself so well under control as one after another entered the breakfast-room, his manner showed no sign of disturbance, he even said good-morning to Mr. Forbes. But then having done his part, he took refuge behind a man's citadel—the morning paper—and became apparently engrossed in the events of interest stirring the political world of Rome.

Neither did I neglect the usual morning greetings, and I talked of the wind and rain. I smiled when Alice asked: "Did I think the storm would prevent the proposed visit to the Vatican?" It is strange, but this is the first morning since Bertie's death that anything like a light-hearted hum of conversation has broken the hush that so lingers after a

separation, caused by the departure from which there is no return. Alice and Madie were almost playful as they discussed the theory of color,—Alice maintaining that Nature never made mistakes in the colors which she brings into juxtaposition, while Madie asserted that Nature was guilty of crude harshness in tinting and combination. In proof of her opinion she quoted the grays and yellow-browns found on the upper and under sides of lichens, and the bark of some forest trees. “Nature is afraid of sharp contrasts,” she said, as she broke a trailing spray of morning-glories from the vine blossoming in the window-box, and pointing to the delicate white line which divides blue from pink, she exclaimed: “See, sharply-contrasting colors do not touch.”

Without waiting for a reply, Madie sprang from her seat at the breakfast-table and wound the flowering vine as a coronal around the heavy coil of Alice’s beautiful hair. It would be difficult to imagine a sweeter picture than Alice at that minute; but as the flowers touched her brow she shivered as

though with sudden dread, and hastily pulled off the wreath and tossed it aside. Ten minutes later the delicate blossoms had curled their leaves and drooped and faded. Looking at them I could but wonder did Alice instinctively feel they were emblems of her future? Did some door open for her through which she caught a glimpse?—Be this as it may, she was ready to reply to Madie, though the animation had gone from her voice and manner. Nevertheless the examples by which she illustrated Nature's harmonious color-blending were all vivid as pictures. "Think," she said, "of blue harebells that smile out of tufts of green, and are rooted in clefts of slaty rock; where can a more perfect trio of color be found?—Think, too, of pale blue and green seen in the shine of sunlight, what can be more lovely; and think of ruins half hidden by ivy, what can be more tender?"

"But these are not contrasts so much as blending of color," Madie replied.

"Think, then," Alice answered, "of red poppies growing in among the corn, and of

king-cups blossoming by a dusty roadside. Surely they are like a melody for harmony."

I think Alice is right, and I believe if we took more note of Nature we would find her the best and safest color teacher.

Neither Mrs. Howland nor I objected to the plan for the morning at the Vatican, for Mrs. Howland had received a hint from her husband, which caused her to share my desire to get the girls out of the way, while we consulted how Mr. Forbes and Alice were to be told of his previous engagement. This led us to eagerly accept his offer to act as escort, while Mrs. Howland satisfied her scruples of etiquette by including in the party her maid Martin, a middle-aged woman. It was early, hardly more than ten o'clock, when they started,—Edith and Madie with Martin in advance, Alice and Mr. Forbes following more slowly. The rain was still falling and the narrow pavements were wet and slippery. As I watched them, spite the storm, I looked out on a gay, picturesque scene such as be-

longs only to an Italian city. My sympathy with Alice as she started unconsciously for that last walk with Stephen Forbes was so intense, in imagination I accompanied her every step of the way.

Later in the day, Madie described the events of the morning so vividly I feel as though I had seen all with my own eyes. On account of the storm the huge building was comparatively empty, and the absence of the wonted throng of sight-seers served to rivet Madie's attention on a slender English girl accompanied by an elderly attendant. The girl was apparently absorbed in the study of one of Raffaele's Madonna faces, and though it was after mid-day when Alice and Edith were ready to leave the gallery she was still contemplating the picture. Once when Mr. Forbes had expressed a half-impatient wish that Alice would not prolong her stay, Madie noticed the slender girlish figure turned hastily, and pushed aside her heavy veil as though to speak. But she did not. The rain was still falling when the girls started to return, and

Madie and Edith again linked arms, and followed by Martin, hastened on their way, supposing Alice and Mr. Forbes were close behind them. But on the hotel steps Mr. Howland met them with the inquiry, "Where are Alice and Mr. Forbes?" "They must have returned by some other street and entrance," Edith replied, and lightly she and Madie tripped up the broad marble stairway. They paused for a moment as they passed my door to ask, "Has Alice returned?" but without waiting for a reply they sped on to their rooms at the end of the corridor. The echo of their light foot-falls had hardly died away when Alice stood before me. But oh, such a changed Alice—all the color had gone from her face; she had a frozen, half-frightened look. When I heard her voice, I took courage, though it was strange and unlike herself; there was a dull, hopeless patience in her manner also, sadder than any violent outbreak of grief. She was perfectly calm; she told me all she knew, saying as she ended: "We will not speak of it again. No, not again."—And then

—just for a second she uttered a bitter cry, sharp and despairing. By and by tears came, warm, natural tears—then I left her; for there are times when one craves to be alone with their sorrow and God.

It was twilight when I returned to Alice; she was kneeling with her head bowed on the cold marble of the centre-table. The comb which had confined her beautiful hair had loosened, and it fell about her face and shoulders in soft, wavy masses, and in the dim light it concealed the alteration a few hours had wrought in the sweet countenance which had been so bright and tranquil in the morning. But when the light from the lamp I carried fell full on her I saw the change. And yet her dark eyes were luminous and calm, and steadfast as they met mine. I knew from their expression that already she had been striving to learn from her sorrow, sorrow's blessed lesson, tenderness for other sufferers, for almost immediately she asked for Milicent Ward. But before I sent for her, Alice

said: "Tell him I will try to forgive. Yes, I do forgive, but we will not meet again here on earth—perhaps in Heaven—God's mercy is Infinite, and I will pray."

A minute later she laid in my hand the betrothal-ring, with its one clear-cut diamond. Somehow it shone like a cold, glistening eye. I have hated diamonds ever since.

What passed between Alice and Milicent I do not know. I left the room as Milicent entered, but when I kissed Alice good-night, she said in a gentle, sad, but decided voice: "Milicent Ward will stay with me henceforth, not as a dependent, but as my adopted sister." It has always been a part of Alice Fraser's lofty nature, when she does a noble thing, to do it thus generously and royally.

XXVII.

LOOKING over the pages I wrote yesterday, I find I recorded the afterpart of Alice's discovery of Stephen Forbes' falseness before I told how that discovery came about. It was all simple and natural, and while we were pondering how to tell her, that blessed solver of enigmas—which, as I said, I call Providence—had taken the matter out of our care, and she was brought face to face with Milicent—and then she knew. It happened in this way. As Mr. Sterling was about starting for our hotel he observed a restless excitement in Milicent's manner, and he knew the best way to quiet it was to occupy her mind. Hence he proposed leaving her with Mrs. Jones at the Vatican, feeling sure that with her love for art she would be diverted by the wonderful treasures that would there surround her. It never occurred to him that

any of our party would visit the gallery that storm-encompassed morning. But hardly had he left her when Milicent recognized Mr. Forbes, and with a woman's instinct she straightway knew it was Alice, and not either Madie or Edith, to whom he had whispered words that once she thought were for her alone. After her recognition of him, she seemed unable to force herself to leave the place, not that she lingered with any idea of speaking. No, the emotion that swayed her was simply a subtle fascination. All living things possess something akin to it; it has nothing to do with intellect or affection; it is a mere blind instinct, like that which leads a moth to flutter about a flame, or a fly to play with a spider's web.

And Milicent would have remained unrecognized had it not been that just as Alice was leaving the Vatican she missed her note-book—this explains how she became separated from Madie and Edith. As she hastily returned in search of it, Stephen Forbes languidly sauntered after her—he

never could keep step with Alice when she moved with the light, airy swiftness that was rhythmic as music. It was then that Harry Griffin joined him; the note-book was easily found, and by it lay a tiny knot of violets Alice had bought from a flower-girl, out in the rain, in the early morning. She had given them to Mr. Forbes, but so carelessly he regarded the little love-token, he never noticed when it fell from his button-hole. But Milicent had seen it fall, and tears had filled her blue eyes at the sight. Alice saw it, too, when she stooped for her tablets, and she caught, as Milicent did, the fragrant odor of the crushed flowers that had been trodden under-foot so many times!

As she bent forward to reach the note-book, Milicent, with the quick impulse of a gentle heart, also stooped to pick it up, and it was she who handed the dainty golden-clasped thing to Alice. Its ivory cover had been broken by the fall — not destroyed — only broken!

As Milicent placed the fragments in Alice's

hand she looked up, and there was something in that glance which held those two women spell-bound. It was Milicent's gaze that first faltered, and then it turned from Alice to Mr. Forbes.—And Alice—sweet, tender Alice, her gaze followed Milicent's, and she saw an expression on the face of the man she loved, which startled her like the foreboding of some undefined terror—and women are quick, love is a speedy enlightener; after a moment, as though by a lightning's flash, she knew. But it was only in a general way. Milicent was noble. Her words were few and simple; she made no scene in reply to Alice's heart-pleading query, "What is it?"—she answered, "I loved him; he said he loved me, I believed him, we were to have been married, but——"

Alice did not wait for the conclusion of Milicent's sentence, as with a quick gesture she silenced the denial Mr. Forbes strove to utter. And then, like some winged creature, treading on air, she passed down the gallery, and on, and out, into the rain and the wind.

She had reached the hotel steps before Harry overtook her, and till that minute she had not once faltered; then strength failed and she would have fallen save for his strong supporting arm. All she said was, "I am cold, oh, so cold." And a shiver shook her slight frame till it bent and quivered like a reed, but Harry knew it was no chill caused by exposure to the raging storm and beating rain. Oh, if it only had been!

He was tender as a brother; he wrapped his warm plaid about her; he guided her trembling steps to my door, and there he left her, and of our meeting I have already told.

XXVIII.

A LICE FRASER'S decision to keep Milicent Ward with her as an adopted sister, called forth Mrs. Howland's strongly expressed disapproval. Nevertheless, I consented, and Mr. Howland did not object.

The truth is, my own heart goes out with great tenderness toward her, she is motherless and still so young. And she has had sorrow enough to fill a long life pressed into the twenty-three years of her earthly existence. Every hour I find also more and more reason to respect and admire her. Indeed neither she nor Alice are moulded in any way after a commonplace type. You know something of Alice, and what a rare character hers is, and this English girl is not far behind her in the possession of a peculiarly refined nature. The dignity of her manner, and the simplicity of her words revealed this integrity and pure-

ness of heart and mind. It is this strength of moral principle, and strong faith in God, which gives her an influence entirely independent of social position and circumstance. At the same time she is lovely to look at; she is not so tall as Alice, and perhaps a little too slight, still she is singularly graceful in form and movement. Her severely plain dress of deep mourning gives also an air of elegance to her appearance which satisfies even Mrs. Howland's critical taste. Her eyes are blue, and Saxon blue eyes have a charm, a depth and purity of color, the blue of no other race can rival. Do I not know?—My mother was an English woman. In Millicent's eyes the wistful look nourished by early sorrow is half hidden by the longest lashes I think I ever saw. Her hair is fair and straight, and fine as silk. She wears it simply, brushed smoothly back from her broad, clear brow. Her face is rather small—in that she is un-English—it is oval too, rather than rounded. She has a straight nose and a mouth not small, yet one forgets to call it large, it is so

delicately formed, and sweet in expression. Her complexion, like her hair, is fair, and lacks color,—in that too she is un-English, though her lips are deep red and rather full. Still, sweet and attractive as she is, I repeat, Milicent's power is centred in her moral qualities. And thus she is another illustration of the truth that character is the real seat of power and influence.

But it is time to return to Alice and her sudden waking from life's dream to its bitter reality. I may well call it sudden, for between the dawning and ending of a space of time brief as one day, she lost not only the man who had professed to love her, but what was far worse to a nature like hers, she was forced to realize the man she loved, did not exist save in the ideal her imagination had created. And yet it was no more possible for her to blot Stephen Forbes from her memory than it was possible for her mind to stop thinking, for to forget is beyond the power of mortals. Despite this, how frequently we hear repeated the old maxim, "forget

and forgive"; whereas the most we can do is not to brood over injuries, and not to think unworthy thoughts. This is the way in which Alice forgives, and it enables her to encounter her life's undoing with a calm, brave spirit which refuses to admit sickly sentimentality. Hence there is nothing bitter or overstrained in the attitude of her mind, or the emotions of her heart, either toward God, the world, or the man who has come like a shadow between her and love's sunshine. But the Alice of yesterday has gone, never to return, and the Alice who has taken her place, is like a stately white lily drooping in the May-time of its blossoming.

She and Stephen Forbes did not meet after that encounter in the Vatican, and he left Rome that very night. Mrs. Howland explained his sudden departure to our English and American acquaintances by the fact, that he has hastily decided to join a company of scientific men just starting for the wilds of Central Africa. This expedition affords Mrs. Howland ample material with which to silence

the buzz of social gossip. And more than once to-day I have heard her enlarging on his thirst for new sensations and discovery, saying, "Certainly they will be gratified in that wonderful weird world of human beings, strange birds and beasts, plants and insects, among which he will be able to pursue his study of the moral and social problems of life." Strangers did not detect the satire and bitterness with which she added, "Think, he can study anthropology, ethnology, and even theology, sure that each will be presented to his mind in new and startling lights."

Harry Griffin's plan to speedily depart from Rome causes no surprise, for it is well known that for several weeks he has been ready for his homeward voyage, but delayed, by the slowness of the Governmental authorities in obtaining the permits, necessary for the removal of Bertie's still form. The taking home of Bertie's remains, while it is a sacred service, is, also, fraught with much that is exceedingly painful to Harry. But the lad's mother pleads for

the comfort of her boy's grave in his native land.

"'Tis little, but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blessed,
Among familiar names to rest,
And in the places of his youth."

It is thus Mrs. Griffin writes, and Harry is not a son inclined to refuse his mother's request.

Alice and I plan leaving too. We will go to England for a few months, and Milicent has written to ask her friend, Mrs. Gilbert, if she will let us find refuge in her home, Cliff House, which Milicent describes as a quaint old mansion, located in the vicinity of a seaport town, hidden away in the southeast angle of Cornwall. It is a quiet nook of the world, in among the most romantic and interesting coast scenery of that county. Meanwhile Madie will remain with Mr. and Mrs. Howland and Edith for the present, and Frank Howland will join a party of young Americans, yachting on the Mediterranean. And so it happens we who have been com-

panions for months, separate never to meet again an unbroken circle, for Bertie has gone—beyond return—and Stephen Forbes—truly he has passed out of our life, in the sense of companionship, as entirely as if henceforth he lived in another world—and he does, for that matter!—

XXIX.

THOUGH the events recorded in the by-gone pages were deeply interesting to Harry Griffin, they have not silenced the question that has been pleading in his soul for a reply from the hour Bertie's spirit passed into the silence and the mystery of the unseen. And because of this, I know the days and nights of Harry's voyage will be full of mental and spiritual conflict, for by nature he distrusts mystery, and he belongs to this age that is marked by a constantly growing desire after *Realism*. But while I am troubled for him, I take comfort in the fact that he has come to a place in his spiritual life where war with self has begun; hence his soul is growing, and it will continue to grow, till he grasps the blessed hope of immortality, which he cannot now lay hold of, because he is seeking to find a Christ without a Cross. Meanwhile,

Harry says little of what he feels, except to Edith, to whom he turns for comfort, and she, alas, has so little to give. For while Edith is a strong advocate of creed, and the outward observance of religious services, when brought into contact with Harry's perplexity, she is unable to give any vital account of faith in relation to herself; and what Harry wants is the supporting of a belief warm and living in its hold of immortal hope, not stereotyped words and formal phrases; and Edith's platitudes and repetition of traditional belief is something apart from her real self, and empty of the personal experience he craves. Thus they are like two children groping in the dark, unable to help one the other, save by the strength there is in the hand-clasp of love.

I never can understand why Edith attracted Harry; Alice, or Madie with her alert mind, seem so much better suited to him, and either of them would have come so much nearer to his intellectual level. Still it is Edith Harry has chosen, and she is never so happy as when with him; and despite her dislike

of discussion, during the by-gone months, I have never once seen her composure ruffled when he and Mr. Forbes have reasoned and speculated; though she maintains that she has no courage to dispute, and calls herself a mental coward in the presence of facts.

"What I enjoy," she is wont to say, "is to *feel*; and there is luxury for me in the emotion of wonder and mystery."

All this is so unlike Madie, who has many a time lost her temper during discussions to which her petulance has added zest and interest.

I think Harry Griffin hardly realizes the mental stimulant Madie is to him, and this makes me anxious; for while now he is satisfied with Edith, and accepts her lack of power to keep step with him intellectually as an evidence of her womanliness, I fear the subtle influence Madie has gained by intruding herself, without apparent effort, into conversations which accentuate her superior knowledge and power of thought by bringing them into bold contrast with Edith's limitations. Madie seeks

opportunities, also, to display her own grace of person, and from having been merely a pretty, attractive girl, she has speedily developed into a creature so picturesque and charming, her presence seems to take the color and sparkle from other maidens.

Despite my anxiety, Harry and Edith are to part to-morrow with love and trust unshadowed, and they are looking forward to a summer-time meeting, the forecasting joy of which sounds in their hearts, like the far-off music of wedding-bells echoing over the sea. I wish I could divest myself of the feeling that this evening is destined to be the time which bounds the most light-hearted gladness Edith Howland will ever know, and that it holds the hour memory will halo all her life long, as the crown of her young love. It is wont to be thus in the lives of most women that one hour is supreme, and glorified beyond all others, even though after-joy may be sweet and complete. Anyway, I am glad the peace and loving stillness of the ending of this beautiful day encompassed Harry and

Edith as they talked of their parting, and that Edith smiled at Harry's brave words, and plans for the future. When from plans he passed to aspirations, she listened with marvelling exultation to his profound thoughts, while the soft flush on her fair face deepened into a rosy red as he added words, that are among the dearest a good, true-hearted woman can hear. For Harry whispered that her love would be to him like a guardian spirit during the months of their separation, and that whenever he looked at the stars shining in the clear blue of the over-arching heavens, a peace would steal into his soul, because their pure light would seem to flash a message from her heart to his. Lovers have said, and will continue to say, much the same words long as the world lasts. And women will cherish the memory of such words long after the roses have faded from their cheeks, and the joy-note gone from their voices. Thank God this is so, for memory softens many a heart-ache!

I was sitting in the dimly-lighted parlor a little apart from Alice and Milicent, when Harry and Edith left the balcony and joined me. Without delay Harry spoke of the conflict waging in his mind between faith and doubt. In reply I could only remind him of Bertie, and his steadfast clinging to the time-tested truth that "We must obey before we can prove," and that it is by doing that we learn to know of the doctrine, while the sure way to find Truth is to be true.

I was sorry Madie interrupted the conversation, and still more sorry when Harry accepted her offer to send him, in Edith's letters, an occasional note, for which she playfully demanded the promise of a now-and-then reply. And yet surely Madie would scorn the idea of stooping to deceit and meanness, and planning to undermine Harry's affection for Edith by anything that required a deliberate purpose, as written words would. Surely her efforts to place herself in a favorable light and Edith in an unfavorable, have been the outcome of impulse, to which she is inclined,

because she has a ready sensibility, and it is easy for her to throw herself into an exalted state of thought and feeling. Sometimes I think when she is under excitement, it so rouses and kindles her imagination and visionary power, that almost for the time she herself confuses her rapid apprehensions with real emotions, and so she glides, with a fatal readiness, into a complacent and æsthetic state of mind which seems even to herself to comprehend everything, while it really comprehends nothing. She is so sweet and winsome, surely this must be so, and yet—yet, I am haunted to-night, by much the vague sense of uneasiness I have felt before, because of the possibilities of her nature for evil as well as good. And again the dim recognition of this which I had the day of our sailing, comes back to me accompanied by the memory of a quick turn of thought which made a mental picture, that lasted long enough to suggest its parable and parallel linking with the story of Madie Leigh's unfolding life. This thought-picture was only of a robin's nest, I saw just

before leaving my New England home. It was nestled in among the branches and twigs of the maple that grows by the garden gate, and half hidden by the tender green of spring-time leafage. Fluttering on restless wings I saw the parent birds intent on luring their fledglings from the sheltering nest that they might try their young wings. And oh! the futile efforts those birdlings made. Only one, and there were five, attained so much as a rod of upward flight—yes, surely this memory-picture holds a type of life, but it would be meaningless to Harry and Edith were I to pass it on to them, for as they said good-night, which is their good-bye—Harry is to start at midnight—they cast the Past and the Present into the background before the bright Future.

To-morrow Alice and I, also, leave Rome; and before the week ends the apartments in this old hotel, which we have called our winter home, will echo to the sound of other footsteps and other voices.

As I have already said, Alice is not inclined

to speak of herself, and at this time she is more than ever reserved. Still, to-night she gave me a broad inlook into her heart. I went to her room to help with her packing. As I entered, she was turning the leaves of a Switzerland guide-book. Almost every page suggests some memory of Bertie, and the happy days of our by-gone summer. Many of these memories are emphasized by pressed flowers, leaves, and ferns. As I approached, Alice pointed to a cluster of star-like forget-me-nots, from which the blue had not yet faded.

“Bertie gave them to me,” she said; “he gathered them from a grave in Geneva,” and she added: “I remember how I asked him what I should do, if as life went on, I came to a grave on which no flower grew—a grave marked only by a stone. Who will roll the stone away?—that was what I asked Bertie.” For a minute Alice was silent, then she softly said: “And Bertie answered, ‘God!’”

XXX.

IT was morning when we left Rome, and a perfect Italian day, the wind a whisper of air, and the sky intensely blue without a cloud. Mr. Howland made every possible arrangement for our comfort. He insisted, also, on going with us as far as Havre: After that, with England's white cliffs so almost in sight, he trusted us to take care of ourselves. And though in reality neither Alice nor I had taken so much as one step on English soil, it in no way seemed a foreign country, and we felt almost as if we were going home. I never can forget the warm, hospitable welcome with which Lady Ann greeted us. I call her Lady Ann, for this is the title by which she is known in the outlying parishes by the simple country folk, among whom she has been a ministering angel for years. The rooms allotted us all have windows looking seaward, and

the house on this side is shielded from the north and east winds by high cliffs, while perpendicular rocks and out-jutting reefs form a natural rampart against the incoming tides. To the west runs a long level stretch of sandy beach, and beyond a broken surf-line—and then the waters of the ocean.—I am thus minute in description that you may know how peculiarly well situated the place is to Alice Fraser. Indeed it would be difficult to find more picturesque surroundings, and more objects of interest within easy access, had we searched from one end of England to the other. And now, while we are resting in this quiet retreat, I will put aside my pen for a time.—When I resume it, I wonder, will it be to tell of joy or of sorrow?

PART II.

“Life’s harvest reap, like the wheat’s fruitful ear.”

“Is life worth living? Yes, if it be true
• Life is worth living, death worth dying too.”

I.

AS after a silence that spans years I re-open my diary, or character-study book, whichever you call this record, I realize, when a task is undertaken it is wise to avoid a break if possible—for I am at a loss just when, where, and how to take up the dropped stitches of my narrative. I am bewildered also by the fact that it is woven from real life, hence I necessarily find many threads broken, and others tangled and mixed in strange unexpected ways. But as I delve in memory's store-house, searching for periods worthy of note, because of their leading to the knowledge of God as a Father, and their influence in moulding character, this difficulty smooths itself out. And I find that memories assume the form in my mind of separate pictures, in which the spiritual experience of the different members of the little company of which

I have told in the foregoing pages, stands out distinctly portrayed, in the bright colors of joy, and the dark shades of sorrow. As for the events and surroundings connected with these experiences they are like frames—some all of gold, others, alas, mere tinsel, and still others good solid wood, ash, oak, and cedar. I am brought face to face, too, with the fact of life's capacities and issues independent of circumstances, for I realize as I never did before, "how much more life is than the mere personal sorrow or joy through which it finds expression; more than the length of days in which it is visible to human eyes; more than the fullness of means which reveal its power. All these pass away, but in the process of their vanishing a spiritual result has been fulfilled. The soul has been brought into fellowship with man and with the world and with God. It has shaped a character for itself. It is at the end—most solemn thought—as it has been used."

How the knowledge of this makes "each day a little life," each hour sacred, for as Schiller wrote:

“The moments we forego
Eternity itself cannot retrieve.”

And yet it is not the hours that are important, but as I said before it is the way in which we use them. I made not long ago a brief manual of the value of Time, because of the opportunity it gives for serving God and man, and just here I note down a page of extracts from it, for I would fain emphasize Dante's line :

“Who knows most, him loss of time most
grieves.”

And Jeremy Taylor's maxim : “He that is choice of his time will be choice of his actions.” These words are illustrated by Richard the Second's assertion : “I wasted time, and now time doth waste me.” This truth Milton also accentuates, saying : “The mis-spents of every minute are a new record against us in Heaven. Surely if we thought this, we should dismiss them with better reports and not suffer them to fly empty away. . . . How happy is it when they carry up not

only the message but the fruit of good; and stay with the Ancient of Days to speak for us before His glorious throne."

To return to my narrative, the first epoch I pause to ponder is sweet as a violet peeping out from under the withered leaves of a by-gone summer; and during it I learned the privilege as well as the duty of cheerfulness—that other name for happiness.—I found also the surest way to obtain this blessedness consists in not magnifying trifling trouble, but resolutely looking on the bright side, remembering even when sorrow presses heavily on the heart it is no excuse for separating oneself from the interests of others, for separation not only leads to selfishness but it results in dullness. Seeing this I plainly saw, too, that if I was to be cheerful and happy and helpful to Alice, my heart must be like a projectile, able to reach out of my own experience, and into hers, even though it involved a double amount of discipline, my own, and hers too.

For the first few months after we came to the Cliff House it cost me something of an effort

to do this, though well I knew the truism, that "life is the discipline of love, and love is the soul of life." But when I did accept it, I straightway saw it was my Heavenly Father's way of giving me the comfort of again being of service, and this makes the third time He has manifested to me that my calling and vocation in life is "to comfort others, with the comfort wherewith I am comforted." For when Jack was taken from me grandpapa so needed my care, and then when he was taken, I was all in all to my father, and now father has gone, and Alice needs me. But her need is only for a passing time; I am not to her as I was to Jack, grandpapa, and father, their dearest earthly treasure. Indeed I am inclined to think, judging from my own experience, and that of the friends I have known most intimately, God makes us a necessity to but one or two persons, just as we only have the capacity to love one or two with an all-masterful love. There is something in this that ought to comfort lonely people who have once filled the first place in dear hearts that

have gone to Heaven, for in the soul's life love is like memory an abiding possession. But this does not make loneliness any the less real, it does not make pain any the less pain, but it helps us to endure as seeing Christ—and in Him—our loved ones who are invisible; it makes us yearn for unrealized ideals, and it warms into activity, the questions, How can I fill my empty life with energy, love, and service again? How can I keep care outside my heart, and tranquillity in it?

These are difficult questions; no wonder they can only be answered by the love of Him, through which we learn that whether life be happy or unhappy, empty or full, does not depend on circumstances, but on the spirit in which we live. This suggests a Bible verse which I have before said always perplexes me. I refer to the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens." I am convinced it is strictly confined to the duty of giving, and quite independent of receiving, for except in material aid, however sweet and soothing sympathy

and love may be, in hours of anguish it cannot *bear* the burden. The older I grow the more I am impressed with the truth that we must, as far as earthly aid is concerned, bear our trials alone. The reason is obvious, and we know where the heavy-laden are to look, and knowing this, how our mortal loneliness seems to echo the words, "Of the people there was none with Him"—and "the servant is not above his master"! I often wonder that clergymen preaching on the solitariness of Christ—which is a type of our loneliness of soul—do not illustrate the subject by the simple record contained in the eighth and ninth chapters of John, where in a few words all the story is told. What a picture they suggest! "And every man went unto his own house; Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives."——

And yet, while this loneliness of soul must belong to every true life, while each nature has its own temptations, and the individuality of each necessitates that each must take up their life-plan, and meet their trial-hour alone,

the spiritual life is so mysterious, so complex, our aloneness does not interfere with the truth, that we share the joys and sorrows, the sin and weakness of those about us, for in Christ we are called to be fellow-workers with God, and His sympathy and succor takes hold of weakness, sin, and sorrow with a clasp as firm as that with which it grasps gladness and goodness.

II.

“**A** KNOT can often be untied by daylight which by lamplight seems inextricable.” This old proverb comes to my mind as I recall my last night’s perplexity as to whose story I should tell first, for this morning as I ask the question a sweet voice answers, “Mine.”—Looking up I meet the gaze of loving eyes with a deep calm in their depths that reminds me of the peace which floods a mid-summer sky after a storm has cleared away. Alice’s voice decides me, for I need hardly tell you it is Alice who spoke. And I will begin with her history, taking it up where we left it. You will remember my last mention of her was just after our arrival at the coast-town at the far end of Cornwall. Almost immediately I recognized the ministry of Nature was the best solace for her wounded heart. And as she entered into companionship with sea, land, and sky, sadness slowly

vanished from her sweet face as mist fades before sunrise. I do not mean that in a few brief weeks she found this tranquillity of soul. No; there were months and years of hard struggle, before she came out of the shadow, and even then, after a brief gleam of sunshine, darkness settled again for a time over her heart's horizon. Meanwhile, for her comforting, she heard a voice in the sea-waves; she saw a meaning in the out-jutting reefs, the bold, rocky cliffs, and in the peaceful, low-lying shore. There were helps for her, too, in the well-nigh endless variety of inland objects surrounding the Manor on its landward sides, and they were blended into the unity of a picture which suggested the unity underlying her life, though its calm had been so rudely broken. Then, too, though her heart did not cease to ache, she was diverted, for how could a mind active as hers be dull, when every simple thing seemed to ask a question?

“Think,” she said, “I do not even know what gives its loveliness of form to the lily;

its depth of color to the sunset ; its fragrance to the rose."——

"No, I cannot be dull," she continued, "when earth, air, and water are alike mysterious to me ; when as I stretch out my hand I do not touch anything the properties of which I have mastered ; and all the time Nature is inviting me to talk earnestly with her, to understand her, to subdue her, and to be blessed by her.'"

The interest the study of Nature afforded Alice's desolate heart was like a friend to her during the first six months of our stay with Lady Ann, and it has been an abiding guest during every year that has come and gone since, and its interest knows no abatement whether the season be spring, summer, autumn, or winter. As a sequence to this, Alice's mind awoke to an increased desire for a knowledge of science and its wonders, and this led to a time of mental perplexity and spiritual conflict, for it brought her into contact with thoughts and theories that belong to this era, and she did not escape the theo-

logical difficulties and up-turning of soul, an earnest seeker after truth must encounter now when the spiritual and religious atmosphere is as full of theory and speculation as the air is full of snowflakes during a December snowfall. I did not regret this experience, for I felt sure it would leave Alice with a mind and soul like a blank white page ready for the writing of faith. For she had given her heart to Christ long before the discipline of doubt and perplexity came, hence I knew in His good time He would lead her out of the shadow into the clear shining of His Love, and I knew, because I had been tried, that while—if I may recall the familiar story—the pitiless Sphinx sets before each generation the enigma of existence in a new form, the answer to the old riddle is always the same, Christ. Thus I did not trouble, even though she did stumble and flounder through drifts of speculation, while now and then theological dogma and hazy, subtle arguments dimmed her spiritual sight. When at last the Love broke through those clouds of

doubt it was indeed a clear shining after rain, and a light so bright her sight was like that of an eagle that sees beyond the fog and mists that encompass this lower world. The problem that perplexed Alice most during the season of doubt that tried her faith revolved around the mystery of God's goodness, bringing the elements of human happiness into the foreground of a life, and then the destruction of those elements by His severity. The only reply I could give to this perplexity was the simple one that God knows and He loves, for that satisfies me more than any argument. But Lady Ann probed that, and many another of Alice's queries, to the very centre. By way of illustrating this especial difficulty, she turned for a metaphor, to Alice's favorite teacher,—Nature.

And a change in the weather made Nature a well-chosen commentary wherein to seek for an illustration of the seeming contradiction in Goodness and Severity. The morning Lady Ann referred to it, low black clouds came scudding from eastward over the sky, till be-

fore noontime, they had hidden the blue that for days had been clear as a wide-open Gospel page. The wind also, caught the waves, and dashed them far up the sandy beach, and against the rocks and reefs, where they broke in foam-crested spray, or rolled seaward again to mingle with the angry turmoil of the raging waters of the Bay. During the hours that storm continued, Alice did little but look from the window.

"It surely ought to help explain my life," she said, "for Nature must be able to interpret the moral scenery of our lives, in the griefs, as well as in the joys that come through the affections."

"Not only ought, but does," Lady Ann said. "For while 'God has all tenderness, He has nothing of weakness, hence with Him while there is unmeasured goodness there is no leniency, no mitigation of holy Law,' when He knows the higher education of His children needs its enforcement."

For full five minutes after Lady Ann ceased speaking, the silence in the room was unbrok-

en, except by the moaning of the wind and the roar of the waves.

Presently the old lady continued :

“ ‘ Surely the dearest part of affection is its unchangeableness, hence the elevation we are conscious of when we lift ourselves to the love of God, the serene peace which an affection at once so lofty and so secure breathes.’ ”

It was by such sentiments this high-minded woman made us feel that “ though tempted on the tenderest side of his nature, no soul has a right to depart from the truth of his own being, from that in man which corresponds with the severity of God.”

“ Remember,” she said ; “ ‘ pliancy, yielding, the easy moulding of one’s own sense of Right to the inclinations of another are the certain means to loosen the foundations of influence, to make light and unsubstantial the feeling of regard, to remove even the possibility of that moral rest and confidence for the heart, which is the mightiest hold that one being can have upon another, the nobility and strength of the affections.’ ”

She bade us also remember, that "we have serener hearts, because with God there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and that knowing both the aims and the ways of His goodness, we know also the severity with which He adheres to them."

That Lady Ann had attained the serenity of spirit this knowledge gives, one look at her clear-cut face told, it was so calm and beautiful in her old age, and it glowed with such tender affection as she kissed Alice, saying:

"Never forget, my child, 'in God's dealings with each of us, Goodness and Severity are the personal appeals, the loving methods by which the Father of Spirits works the deepest Word of His grace': 'Be ye holy, for I am holy: Be ye followers of God, even as dear children.'"

It is sweet to observe the warmth with which Lady Ann's heart has gone out toward Alice, drawn by the magnet sorrow always is to those who know by experience what sorrow means. And hence, because she had been sorely tried herself, she strives to lead Alice

and Milicent to the knowledge that a woman may be vanquished as the world judges, and yet out of defeat gain a victory greater than any the world knows. And think! how the influence of one woman's gentle, tender life, can brighten hundreds of other lives, for there is no staying an influence once started.

The secret of Lady Ann's influence is not far to seek, and it is the one always sure to succeed, for it is the old secret of a loving heart from which selfishness has been purged in the furnace of sorrow, and of a pure spirit fashioned into a likeness of Christ by long study of His character. And thus her greatest joy consisted in efforts to alleviate human suffering, and in pointing to a life higher and better than earth's sin and trouble-marred existence.

Ralph Sterling's was one of the lives Lady Ann Gilbert had thus influenced, and he never forgot that the first strong impulses of his heart toward God, justice, and truth were roused by her teaching and example. And he no more thought of letting the mid-summer

holiday pass without a visit to his old friend, than he would have thought of omitting his yearly visit to his parents. As for Lady Ann's influence over Alice, it did more than brush away spiritual difficulties. For she made plain, also, that the conventional pedantry, which had somewhat involved Alice's ideas of a woman's education, was not the highest and best development of which she was capable. And where Mr. Forbes had reduced Alice's ambition to the narrow limit of his own outlook, which considered a University degree a high enough aim, Lady Ann made her realize that a simple, noble woman was a higher being than one who had spent her best years in a continuous struggle to obtain a world of knowledge, if to gain it she lost that grace of soul that made her woman.

Alice responded to Lady Ann, because from the first she had felt that the fact that she had been deceived was no reason why her life, in so far as it touched other lives, should be narrowed. Work remained, and victory over sorrow and self, is one way of

yielding service—if it be service for Christ's sake.

But I have told you quite enough of the healthful influences that surrounded Alice during the time when she was learning to “suffer and be strong.”—I say suffer, because she was not a woman to cease loving, when deceived and cruelly wounded; for with her, loving meant the acceptance of an emotion that never could entirely pass from her steadfast soul, even though the object that called it forth might. And had Alice been married before the discovery of Mr. Forbes' treachery, I think she would have thrust her wounded heart on one side, and striven in all sweet, wifely ways to win him to a nobler life. Not being thus bound, I feel the time will come when she will realize what Milicent Ward has discovered, that

“The man she loved,
Not only from her present had withdrawn,
But from her past, and there was no such man,
There never had been.”——

And thus, out of the wreck of her early joy, a

more beautiful joy may dawn, bright even, as the colors of the fire I had kindled from the wrecked drift-wood.

As you have doubtless read between the lines, the relation existing between Lady Ann, Alice, Milicent, and myself quickly lost the element of formality, and friendship speedily led to our becoming inmates of her home, rather than remaining mere "lodgers." And what a blessed home this old Cliff House has proved.

III.

I LEFT Alice with Lady Ann and Milicent that year while I made a hasty visit to New England, meeting the Howlands and Madie on shipboard. I found Madie greatly changed, and at first it was difficult for me to believe she was the Madie I had parted from in Rome only a few months before. She had developed into a brilliant beauty, and acquired an easy fluency of speech that made her a sparkling conversationalist. And yet, though able to deal rhetorically and spiritedly with varied topics, I felt it was mere surface talk, and a ready ability rather than conviction. An hour spent in Madie's society convinced me of this, and of the sad truth that she had no real regard for religion, even though she observed outward forms of worship, and no voice equalled hers in sweetness the Sabbath evening we were on shipboard,

when she sang hymns by the score. But I will not dwell on these details. Madie's story is but another version of the old tale "of a woman's shutting her eyes to the issues of self-will and jealousy till the temptations they suggest passed from timid thought to the assertion of deed; and a sweet, well-ordered life, founded on principle, is sacrificed to the imagined sweetness of self-gratification." From such a career there can be but one result—"they who pluck flowers from the edge of the precipice must be prepared to fall."

Madie deteriorated quickly, and her half-defined wish to divert Harry Griffin's affections from Edith to herself became a fixed determination at the time when she playfully proposed to enclose a now-and-then note in Edith's frequent letters to him. Thus before winter had glided into spring the notes had outrun the space allotted them in Edith's well-filled envelopes, and they winged their way to Harry as independent missives. This did not disturb Edith, for suspicion is an outgrowth of lack of confidence, and her trust in

Harry was complete. Once she did ask Madie what she found to say, and Madie in reply told her she was studying art and submitting her ideas to Harry. In fact, Madie was studying harder than ever she had, but it was not art. No, it was dull theological essays and scientific pamphlets, which many a time sent her to bed with a headache, because she found it such a hard task to cull fresh speculations, arguments, and theories on the profound subjects which were of interest to Harry, and which made her letters acceptable to him. And all the time she personally cared no more for the subjects she discussed than the November wind cares for a dry leaf it sends flying through the air. And yet she started currents of thought that drifted Harry Griffin farther out than he had ever been on the restless sea of speculation, where he heard only the

“Melancholy long withdrawing roar”

of “the sea of Faith

Retreating to the breath

Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world,”

Then again she stranded him among reefs of doubt and unbelief that made war not only upon theology, but on faith.

All this breadth of view and glow of thoughts and theories that marked Madie's letters was in striking contrast to Edith's narrow range of topics, which revolved around and reflected the light of Harry's own opinions, till sometimes she seemed to possess no thoughts distinctively her own.

Harry was loyal, but he could not fail to observe the difference in Madie's and Edith's letters, and when a man pauses to compare a woman with whom he can exchange ideas with one who is merely receptive, a tide has begun to rise in his heart which almost imperceptibly increases till what at first was only a narrow brooklet widens into a sea that can even roll between, and divide hearts, that have plighted troth to be as one.

Poor Edith ! It was strange how long she remained blind to the danger threatening her. But when at last her eyes were opened—even though she shut them quickly—she had caught

a glimpse which in a moment changed sunshine into shade. The swift glance which wrought this change occurred the September day of our arrival—September, Edith's wedding month.—From the moment land was sighted I noticed that Madie was deeply excited; it was manifested by an accentuating of her always rapid variations from quietness to gaiety, from smiles to seriousness. The truth is, she realized this meeting with Harry would either crown her efforts to win him with victory, or stamp them a failure. No wonder, then, her heart beat high, while the color deepened in her cheeks and the light brightened in her eyes. It was a hard ordeal for Harry to encounter, as in the eagerness of welcome he stepped lightly on the deck of the brave steamer just come to port, and he was entirely unprepared for it. Edith and I were unprepared also, for the skillful scheme by which Madie secured a position which compelled him to greet her before he could reach Edith, who, in her happiness, had not given a thought to personal adornment,

whereas Madie had concentrated her power of winning admiration into that hour, and she had never been more radiantly lovely to look at—and—Harry saw that loveliness, not a turn of her graceful head, not a ripple of her golden hair, not a smile playing about the dimpled mouth, nor a flash from her bright eyes escaped him. She did not mean they should, and she had a genius for making impressions. It is a power many women possess, but thank God only few stoop to use it.

Madie's heart, also, was filled with a determination to make its story audible to Harry without uttering a word, and he understood that silent language—and their eyes met.—It was at that moment Edith swiftly made her way through the crowd of departing passengers and stood by his side. And though wont to be slow in her perceptions it did not take so much as a brief second for her to grasp the full significance of that glance. I will not linger over that minute. Harry Griffin was noble, and sincere; he truly loved Edith; the emotion Madie stirred in his heart was in one

sense momentary, and almost before the touch of her hand, the flash of her blue eyes had time to formulate into thought, he had trampled under foot the temptation to yield her anything that did not belong to her, and he let her hand fall from his, with a gesture, quick as that with which he would have brushed away a stinging insect. —But the sting had been given,—the glory had faded from the meeting that meant so much to Harry Griffin and the woman who before the month ended he called wife. They neither of them said a word to each other of the discovery that minute had held. Perhaps it was better so, but I think not. I think it is safer when a shadow falls between loving hearts, to bravely walk through it, and sound the darkness to its depth; then if it lifts, all is well, while lurking shadows hold strange forebodings, and cast weird outlines.

IV.

THREE weeks after our arrival Harry and Edith were married. She was a fair, sweet bride, and very naturally she underwent the transformation from a timid maiden, to a self-possessed matron. And her love for Harry was so deep and true, for a time it excluded the memory of the glance which had disturbed her. Harry also put that memory aside, and during the early days of their marriage he was if possible more tenderly considerate than he had been during the days of courtship. Thus Edith was not entirely without a honeymoon. But oh! it was so brief, for almost before the crescent had glided into a full rounded orb, clouds had appeared in her sky—and one cloud can hide the moon! I discovered this during the week I spent with them before I returned to England, for I saw that while faithfully performed, the charm had

gone for Edith from the simple, homely duties, so dear to a loving woman. It could hardly fail to be so, for she was always impressionable, and as quick to detect a change of feeling in those she loved, as she is slow to catch an idea, hence she was sensitive to the fact that Harry's soul was living a life in which she had no part. Recalling that time I can but wonder it did not end in the total wreck of Harry and Edith's happiness. And I think it would, had her love for her husband been less profound, but its sincerity enabled it to cast anchor in his heart, even when they seemed drifting apart. She was also so sweetly patient and unselfish, and so brave in her efforts to conceal her disappointment, the music never went from her voice, nor the gentleness from her words, even when her artistic and romantic nature were most tried by Harry's scientific and reasoning spirit. Then, too, Harry was not at his best those days; his misgivings on points of established beliefs made him restless, and the unsettling of what little faith he had once possessed had told on his temper. The sim-

ple truth is, he was too honest for compromise and sham, and too much in earnest to rest satisfied without seeking a solution of the speculations and doubts, that stimulated by Madie's suggestions, had increased till they were beginning to have much the same effect that overwork has on such a mind and body as his. And Edith had to endure a large share of the mental and physical discomfort this induced. For while this is unquestionably an age in which the rights of women are regarded, there will, nevertheless, as long as time lasts, continue among even the best of husbands slight conjugal tyrannies of temper and self-assertion. And had there been no note of discord, the relation of husband and wife is always more difficult to adjust than any other, bringing as it must two individualities into the closest relationship, and thus bringing different methods of thought and different training into intimate contact. Yet had it not been for Madie Leigh's interference during the months of their engagement, I do not think Harry or Edith would have felt the blank

caused by the difference in their intellectual power; but when once revealed, it became daily more apparent, and Edith from consciousness of inability to follow Harry's mental flights grew silent, while he turned for companionship to his books and scholarly friends. For like many another man he was too clumsy to know how to brush aside the mist that was slowly deepening into a shadow, not only over his home, but into a barrier between his heart and his wife's.

But I will not tarry over these domestic details, which I felt were out of my province to interfere with, except as I could help both Harry and Edith to a firm grasp of the Truth that solves all difficulties, be they great or small. My first serious conversation with Harry told me, in his desire to formulate a religion of the human heart, for the time being, he had striven to banish Bertie's influence. I found him in warm sympathy with "the subjective spirit of the age, which insists on looking at truth, not as it is in itself, in its utter independence of the mind of man, but

as it presents itself to man's mind, or rather as man's mind in very varying moods apprehends it. This spirit, while it has weakened the public hold upon creeds and Scripture, has directed attention with an intensity unknown before our day, to the needs of the human mind, and among them to the superior need of a religion."

The consciousness of this need had roused Harry to work among the masses in the crowded wards of the city, where he strove as a disciple of humanity, with all his young energy to develop the truth that real manhood consists in independence of spirit. In enforcement of this principle in dealing with the lower classes he did not endeavor to win them by scattering shillings, and giving out soup-tickets, but he sought to lift them up to the higher level of honest work, for honest pay. And yet when Harry gave he did it royally, and of the sick he took the tenderest care. He was on the watch, also, for every sign of hopeful moral reform, and ready to help it with cheer and support. I was deeply inter-

ested in his efforts, and yet I could but tell him the doctrine of self-help was but one-sided, unless united to the truth God working *in*, to will and to do, and man working *out*. And this requires that we universalize the God-man, as well as particularize Him, for work to be successful demands the recognition of both elements. But though Harry and I differed, we did not jar one another. I am too much in sympathy with his earnestness of purpose for that, and I have lived long enough to have a clear perception that while in the practical every-dayness of life the power of seeing alike, in one sense, is a rare and valuable gift,—or shall I call it a grace?—in spiritual matters the power of seeing difference is no less valuable. Still I felt it a grave thing that Harry limited work to what man, unaided by a strength higher than his own, can accomplish; for my stronghold amid the circumstances of life which require readjustment is centred in my conviction of the reality of that divine and human life which is made known in Christ—in His sufferings and in His

triumphs, and which alone can solve the enigmas of existence. Harry Griffin's efforts to aid the poor reminded me of one of the questions grandpapa bade me answer in this, my latter-day journal. He did not doubt that this is an age of active Christianity, but his query went beyond the spirit of universal philanthropy which rules, and bade me define whether the essence of that spirit is love toward others for Christ's sake, the sentiment of religion, or the zest of working out individual theories regarding political economy and the elevation of the masses; for while all of these efforts yield full, rich growths of results, beneficial to mankind, yet, except the first, they lack the vigor of spiritual health. I remember hearing grandpapa touch upon this subject in the discussion of the modern tendency to bring to perfection schools of reform and disciplinary institutions, rather than to strive to prevent the need of these multiplying charities by helping the tempted and morally weak to keep from falling, and thus requiring restraint and punishment.

Dear grandpapa, how tenderly he thought of health of soul, much as he did of health of body, hence prevention filled a much larger place in his mind than cure. Truly his daily prayer was, "Deliver us from evil."

To return to Harry; in defense of his position, he insisted on errors of fact and of morals, which he held to be discernible in the Bible; but this in no way lessened his eagerness to enforce a zeal for what he termed the sublime issues of religion, which was "not bound," as he phrased it, to "the letter," and which fires enthusiasm in renouncing the letter. "As a natural result this led him to confuse mere questions of exegetical or scientific learning with the deep, profound lessons the Bible and the Bible only can teach. And so he had entered on what Goethe calls 'the deepest subject in the history of the world, and of mankind, and that to which all others are subordinate—the conflict between faith and unbelief';—and he encased himself with the negations and criticisms which rule, especially among a certain class of the educated

nowadays, to their unspeakable loss, and which suggest questions that revolve around 'What God is not; what Christ is not; what the atonement and work of Christ is not; what prayer is not; what sacraments are not,' rather than dealing with the only questions of practical importance, 'What God, Christ, the atonement, prayer, and the sacraments *are*.' "

Immediately after Bertie's departure, Harry had passed beyond this purely moral and intellectual interest in religion, and then, his soul cried out for a belief that spoke not only to his intellect, but to his heart and will. He could not rest upon the most unimpeachable abstractions. He needed something more than the truest philosophy. He yearned to come in contact with a Heart. But when Madie's influence took hold upon his mind he cut himself loose from the anchorage of belief in the Bible, and shut the door of entrance into relations with the Heart of the Infinite Creator, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

This was his spiritual condition when I bade him farewell, and I could only seek

refuge for my anxiety in the comfort I had found when he parted from me at Rome—I mean the fact, that he recognized his peril, and thus war with self had begun ; I knew too, that God is merciful, Christ pitiful, and

“Who shall say ‘Nay’ when Christ pleads all He is
For us, and holds us with a wounded Hand?”

In parting from Edith I had great hope, for a simple faith in God as a Father I felt sure was slowly unfolding in her heart. She was so much less artificial in her definitions of religion I knew she had caught an inlook, revealing the true, broad principles of real Christian unity, and the truth that faith can find expression by different creeds and forms of worship, because all Christians draw from the same Well, and drink from the same Fountain, of Living Waters. Thus she, like Harry, will learn by different teaching that joy, and woe, and hope, and fear,

“Is just our chance o’er the page of learning love,
How love might be, hath been, and is.”

V.

WHAT Madie Leigh felt when she found her efforts to win Harry had proved unsuccessful, I have no means of knowing. But from that hour she entered on a career, which Mrs. Howland called "a brilliant success." And even before I embarked on my return voyage I heard of her engagement to Sir Guy Campbell, an Englishman, whom she had captivated by her winsome ways, bright conversation, and rare grace and beauty of person.

On my arrival Milicent met me at Liverpool. It was the middle of the lovely season of the year, and as we passed along in the train many thoughts haunted me, and my mind was full of the fleetingness of life here and the need of a resting-place in God. It

was a calm evening ; the sky, a golden orange glow in the west, dotted over with small, white fleecy clouds, while to the east the heavy, dark banks of cloud that rested on the hill-tops were interlined with deep shades of crimson and orange. In truth, all Nature seemed whispering of the comfort promised sorrowing hearts in the words, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, saith the Lord, and ye shall be comforted." Think ! What a rich, tender, full, and loving assurance it is—" *Ye shall* be comforted," and it comes from the Comforter, who is "able *to do* exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think." And yet how boundless thought is ! and how limitless our power of asking ! Nevertheless, God's comfort reaches still farther. It was clear-blue night when at last we reached Cliff House, a few of the greater stars were out, and the moon was just rising. My arrival was a veritable home-coming, and Alice in her gladness opened wide the shy recesses of her heart that she is wont to keep so closely veiled, and in an hour I learned more

of the broad visions of her earnest soul and of her fine character than I had in well-nigh a year's previous intercourse. Milicent has proved a most helpful companion to Alice. She possesses a large supply of common sense, and is free from prejudice ; and while by taste and temperament she is artistic, she is not visionary or romantic. She sees with her bodily eyes only, and the blue sky overhead is the blue sky to her and nothing more. Like most English girls, she has not been trained to the independence of thought which marks American maidens, and her soul is girt about with a strong, abiding faith in the Unseen that is not troubled by speculative questions on religious subjects ; she is satisfied to trust when she cannot understand. She has, too, a great fear of offending God, and her heart is very humble and reverent in her love for Him. Alice calls her an Old Testament believer, for she is like the women of Israel to whom it never occurred to question the Law of Moses or the wisdom of Solomon. She and Alice spent the mid-summer holidays

among the Highlands, and thus it happened Alice did not meet Mr. Sterling when he came for his annual visit to Lady Ann. And now it is time for him to come again, for the months following my return were so quiet and uneventful almost a year has gone by since I last wrote in my diary.

VI.

A LICE so shrinks from hearing Mr. Sterling's name, I was surprised the day before he was expected by her asking Milicent to describe him, which she did, picturing a man between thirty-five and forty, but looking more. In figure tall, but with a slight stoop, and shoulders sufficiently rounded to indicate that his early habits had been those of a scholar; his face, Milicent said, hinted the same story, his eyes being slightly sunken, while there were deep lines about his forehead and mouth that told of sharp mental struggle. And then she described his busy life, and how near and dear to him were the interests of his parish, even though they brought him into contact with scenes which were so unlike the peaceful atmosphere encompassing Cliff House, by contrast, its serene repose must seem almost like stepping from

earth to Heaven. In her desire to avoid Mr. Sterling Alice had again planned to be absent during his stay with Lady Ann, but a month before the time for his visit she had been suddenly prostrated by what the village doctor called "low fever." She was only just convalescing when Ralph Sterling came, and so his personal acquaintance with Alice Fraser began through rendering her kindness. For his strong arm thought nothing of wheeling her invalid chair over the lawn and down the path to the sheltered cove at the end of the old-fashioned garden. Flowers grew in that garden in a bewildering confusion of beauty, while their fragrance blended with the perfume of clover and sweet grass, mingled with the salt odor of sea-weed and sea-breezes, that went singing on their way inland, as though their only mission were to kiss the golden grains, the grassy banks and meadows, shining with the glow of yellow daisies, and radiant with the scarlet of the poppies in among the corn. I felt sorry that Mr. Sterling's first sight of Alice was of a pale maiden whose

beauty for a time is sadly eclipsed, at least to my health-loving eyes. And yet the moment he saw her he felt a sudden beating of his heart and quickening of his pulse that made him determine to win her back to health, strength, and happiness, if there was any power in him to do it. And Ralph Sterling is not a man who distrusts his own powers, for while he thinks very little of himself, the fact that he is thoroughly sincere, straightforward, and good, is apt to give him ascendancy over others; he has great patience also, and this is needed. Meanwhile he does not press himself forward.

Another pause in my journal comes now—a space that covers two years, during which Ralph Sterling and Alice made but slight advance toward friendship. She had regained her physical strength, and she struggled bravely to attain cheerfulness, and enough of victory crowns her efforts for new interests to begin to spring up in her life. But in the struggle she has lost the fresh bloom of

youth, and I grieve over that, for to a middle-aged woman like myself the premature loss of youth always seems a cause for regret. Then, too, I am not keen and far-sighted like Lady Ann, and it is hard for me to believe that out of Alice's loss a sweeter, better, more abiding youngness of soul will blossom, but Lady Ann says it will.

Again a long pause, which brings me to the day when at last Alice knew of Mr. Sterling's love. It hurt her at first, then a great pity filled her gentle heart. Still she frankly told him she had nothing to give in return for all he offered her.

"My heart was killed, it is dead," she said, —and so his first pleading ended, and he returned to work among the poor and suffering of his parish.

VII.

A BRIGHT, beautiful bit of life's most precious gladness has just come to me—a letter from Harry Griffin, which tells, that while he and Edith will always remember the first years of their married life vividly, as mariners remember a night of peril on the sea, they will also remember, that out of that time of storm, Light broke forth as the morning, and the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in His wings.

For God has sent a child to their home and hearts, and with the advent of that little life, the sweet story, old, yet ever new, has been lived over again by Harry and Edith. And Harry has learned that where speculations had misled, science failed, philosophy proved empty, a little child could lead, and that a baby's smile could suddenly unveil the face of God. A minute bounded this experience,

and yet it held the Light and Life of Eternity.

That supreme moment came to Harry, as he bent to kiss Edith's pale brow, as she lifted her weak little hand to stroke his cheek with a wife's loving tenderness, while softly she whispered: "Baby's father."—Those words were a flash of light to Harry's soul, and before them, doubts and speculations rolled away from his mind swiftly as mist lifts its shadows and steals away before the beams of morning sunshine. They did what reason and study had failed to do, and he grasped the wonderful analogy between our relations to God, and the human relations of a father to a child, a child to a father; and from that hour religion became to Harry Griffin "a personal relation—the relation of person to Person."—And he saw that "Faith, however different in its nature from logical certainty, has yet its own sufficient evidence, and in sensibility to this evidence mainly consists spiritual discernment as distinguished from intellectual clearness."

Thus it was that another and happier page was turned for Harry and Edith, even before the hours of their child's life counted a full day.

Later on, Edith sent me a letter, telling how there came a calm summer hour, when as twilight was beginning to deepen, they watched their sleeping child. Watched while stars came out in the sky, and lights began to shine in home windows. Minutes flew by as though winged. Harry and Edith spoke softly to one another, and their speech was of the little soul entrusted to them—an immortal soul.—Yes, Harry believed in immortality now.—And then their hopes were too dear for words, and they held each other's hands, and were still, and the baby slept, and the stars looked down, the moon rose, and in the silence there dawned something dearer, more sacred even than their hopes for the child, for their hearts, that had been so parted, had found one another again.—Oh, God is good. Life is worth living.—Just then the baby woke, blessed little child, not with a cry, but with a smile.

That letter told me, too, that I had helped them to the knowledge of the Heavenly Fatherhood,—and now Harry and Edith's Present is all joy, their Future all hope—and after earth comes Heaven. Meanwhile,

“Worship we the God-head,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,
Worship we our Jesus—
But wherewith for sacred sign?

“Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love the universal sign.”

VIII.

LADY ANN has aged rapidly since we came to Cliff House, and Alice has fallen into the habit of rendering her sweet, daughterly services. Thus it is to Alice she is wont to pass notes and letters that demand replies, with the exception of those received from Mr. Sterling. But toward the end of June there came a day when Lady Ann included a letter from him among those she asked Alice to read.

“Put it aside for the present,” she said; “later on I will listen to it.”

There was excuse for this delay, in the fact that it was Rosemond season—the moon of Roses—and that meant to Lady Ann the time for observing the old custom of gathering roses for the “sweet-pots.” Alice and Millicent had been busy since sunrise, for the roses picked in the dewy freshness of the early day

were thought to be the ones freighted with the sweetest odors.

I can never forget the details of that morning, and the smile on Alice's face as she tripped up the garden-walk with a light-hearted tread, such as she had not had since that day in Rome. She and Milicent carried between them a basket laden with their gleanings, and they had not spared high bush or low.

"Roses, who'll buy our roses?" playfully Alice called, as she caught sight of Lady Ann, equipped with garden-gloves and scissors, and eager to begin her work. It consisted in stripping the fragrant leaves from branch and stem, while my part was spreading the sweet things on the drying-trays ready for them in the southeast corner of the piazza. It was such a pretty picture, that aged lady in her high-backed chair, snow-white cap, and delicate kerchief. And Alice, standing by her side, unconscious of the sweet grace of her attitude. She had so much of her old-time look, it brought tears of gladness to my eyes to see once again the familiar lift of her head, the

play of smiles about her mouth, and the shine of her eyes. Even in her movements she was again like the Alice who had wondered, that long-ago spring-time, what life's dimensions would be. Her voice, too, had the same musical ring it had then; for the echo of sadness which had come into it, sounded but faintly as she thrust her white hand into the laden basket,—fearless of the thorns,—and drew forth rose after rose, shaking their stalks, and brushing the dew from them as she said:

“See, we have been
Where the roses blow;
The ruby red and the maiden blush,
And the damask rose in its velvet flush,
And the white rose dripping snow.”

With a quick change in her tone, that had in it something akin to the “subtle spirit of the rose,” she added:

“Close compressed,
Our Present holds our Future, like a rose
That may not yet its soul uncloze,
Lest angry winds should scatter or molest.”

“Oh, must there be more angry winds?” she murmured. And on the full-blown beauty of the rose she handed Lady Ann, there glistened a shining drop that was not dew. No, I am sure it was not. Yet when I looked from it to Alice, she was smiling in response to her old friend, who in her gentle way said: “Dear child, why fear angry winds? Remember

“‘God’s Spirit will fall on thee as dewdrops on a
rose,
If but like a rose to Him thy heart uncloset.’”

But I will not dwell on this scene. When the last leaf-laden tray had been carried to its sunshiny nook, Lady Ann was tired, and she leaned her head against the back of her chair and closed her eyes, saying: “I will rest while you read me Ralph Sterling’s letter,” and Alice read commonplace words at first, it being thus letters are wont to begin; then came a page in which Mr. Sterling told of his weekly visit to the Manchester Hospital, and of the crowded wards, lined with the low white-

spread cots, from which the pale, wan faces of suffering men looked forth to greet him as he passed, and then,—suddenly Alice's voice faltered.—It was Milicent who read the after-part of that letter,—Milicent, to whom in one sense it meant as much as to Alice. Mr. Sterling wrote: "As I was leaving the building a nurse hastened after me to say, a gentleman had been brought in at day-dawn, and that several times he had whispered my name. 'Will you go to him?' she asked; 'you will find him very low, but perfectly conscious.' I followed Sister Agnes—the nurse in charge—to a private room, and in a moment I stood in the presence of Stephen Forbes. He had reached Manchester by the midnight express, and finding himself too weak for the long drive to the Manor House, which is a mile beyond the Carpet Works, he had given directions to be taken to the hospital, where he was immediately recognized by the physician in attendance. Hours of unconsciousness followed his arrival, and then came a brief rallying and sufficient strength to tell Dr. Man-

ning that his present condition was the result of a fever contracted while in Africa. He also said, when he realized the broken state of his health, he had started for home, intending, after a few days in London, to sail for America. But his illness proved graver than he thought, and the journey he had expected to accomplish in a few months had taken many. When he reached England, he had only strength to make the last effort of his mortal life, and that was to seek the shelter of the Manchester Manor House, occupied, as he knew, by a cousin who had charge of the 'Works.' "—Just here I put Mr. Sterling's letter aside, while I tell the rest of the sad story as I gathered the details from Dr. Manning and Sister Agnes. The only wish Mr. Forbes expressed was to see Ralph Sterling, the Rector of St. Luke's. Why he wanted to see him we cannot tell, for by the time Mr. Sterling reached him he had no strength to say what may have been in his mind. And yet, he lingered through the remaining hours of the day and the night, and on till morning.

Once he whispered, "Alice—Milicent."—But no after-word followed to tell of repentance, or remorse, and the hours closed as they began in the darkness of unbelief.—"Too late"—"too late,"—that was his low moan from midnight on to gray dawn. Quietness came then, unbroken, save by long-drawn breaths, and the low, soft pleading of Ralph Sterling's voice, as he told the story of the prodigal's return, and the Father's compassion. Many a time before Mr. Sterling had knelt by dying men and repeated those words; more than once he had known them to shine like a star in the darkness of despair, but not then.—No—it was too late. Stephen Forbes was reaping as he had sown; he passed away as he had lived, without faith, without God.—And yet, just before the end, there was a long-drawn sigh like a groan, there was a struggle for utterance, and surely the half-formed word was "God."

At that moment day dawned, the sun rose, and a sunbeam fell aslant the dying man's bed, and for a second—only a second—it rested on

his forehead — the forehead a mother had kissed, for Stephen Forbes had been a child once, a happy, innocent child.

Then the watchful nurse drew the curtain before the window, and the momentary light that had illumined the room was dimmed. After that there was no more effort to speak, no more return to consciousness—only God knew the end.——And God is Love. Christ died, and rose again, we must leave it all with Him. —But as far as mortals can see, oh the blackness, the darkness of the unbelief which held that dying man's spirit a captive—and he himself had forged the very chains which bound him, and their first links dated back, far as to the hour when he had yielded to his desire to taste of the fruit of the knowledge of evil! Oh! the agony of that dying moan—"Too late—too late."

IX.

AFTER hearing the end of Mr. Sterling's letter, Alice soon regained her composure, but though outwardly calm, the grief she felt because of the ruin of Stephen Forbes' life for here, and for *There*, no words can tell. For while she trusted in the great tenderness of Infinite Love, she could not hide from herself, that a soul which had refused to believe in God while here on earth, was hardly likely to seek Him in the other world—even if such a search be possible. Her only hope centred around the one word "God," which Mr. Sterling felt sure he had heard, for Alice knew one word to the Father's ear can hold many.—And she strove to remember also, "all things are possible" to the Lord, and though He is a consuming Fire, He is still a God of Love—how surely of Love—for God *is* Love. This was Alice Fraser's comfort.

Alice had been for more than three years like a sister to Milicent, but never was her tenderness so complete as during that time, for Milicent also was sorely grief-stricken by the hopeless closing of Stephen Forbes' earthly life.

For some months after the coming of this sorrow Alice kept up and about, just as she had at the time of her first bitter trial. But her soul was stronger than her body, and soon after I left her for my annual visit to my New England home she was suddenly prostrated, and Lady Ann wrote urging my immediate return. "My white dove with broken wings," Lady Ann called her; "but they will heal," she added, "she will soar again. The Lord is mindful of His own, He will not break the bruised reed."—And He did not.

X.

HOW the years fly ; almost before I knew it June came again, and the time for Mr. Sterling's holiday. But he made no effort to press his suit this summer-time. He knew it was too soon after the sorrow Mr. Forbes' desolate death had caused, for Alice to accept a thought of a new life, with the hope of happy years. And so he waited, and remembered winter has roses, as well as June—Christmas roses, and they have never a thorn !

It was eight weeks after the Christmas-tide when next he visited Cliff House. The summer foliage, which when he left was in full beauty, had faded, but the Laurel and the Holly bushes were green, and the Holly boughs were tipped with scarlet berries, while the Black Thorn was covered with white buds, and in the hedgerows daisies were in bloom. In a sheltered nook I found, also, a tuft of violets

blossoming a month too soon; brave little violets—they looked like a patch of blue sky spotting the brown earth, through which here and there tender grass-blades were pushing their way. And though it was not Nature's season for sweet secrets, though the trees had no young twigs,—the nests no young birds, there were nevertheless signs of promise in the balmy air. The leafless tree-boughs, too, were beginning to take on the different tintings born of the rising sap, and some were dark red, while others were yellow, and rich glowing brown. "Earth is warming, the sea is singing, the sky is smiling," Lady Ann said, and she added, "Winter is well-nigh over and gone," and her kindly eyes rested with a tender light in their glance on Alice. That was the day Mr. Sterling arrived. Only a little while before the time appointed for his coming Alice declared she felt strong enough to walk all by herself, as far as the Cliff seat, from which she could watch the sunset; it was the first effort of the kind she had made since June's "Rosemond," of a year and a half

before, but neither Lady Ann nor I said "Nay." Somehow I think we both felt Alice would not return alone, and she did not, for as the last sunbeam shone across the still waters of the bay, Mr. Sterling joined her. And the time had come when he no longer could keep silent, no longer patient. For after all, though he was so noble, and so good, Ralph Sterling was a mortal man, and he loved Alice, and so he pleaded, and she listened. — And again she made the same reply, again she told him her heart was dead. But still he pleaded, —and still she answered "No." —And then, the sun set; and she arose passively from the garden-seat, and laid her hand on his strong arm. Yes, she let him guide her somewhat feeble steps back to the shelter of the Cliff House. As they entered the wide hall she paused for a moment, as though to catch her breath, and then softly, —so softly, only a lover could have heard the words, she whispered: "Wait till to-morrow."

At the sound of that low whisper Ralph Sterling knew—he, a middle-aged man, whose

hair about the temples was thickly sprinkled with gray ; he, the hard-working rector of a poor parish, in a noisy manufacturing town ; he, who had said good-bye to youth a dozen years before, had won the richest jewel ever a man had called his own. For there was never a woman's heart more jewel-like in truth, purity, and goodness than Alice Fraser's.

The night that followed, Alice will never forget. She could not sleep, and there was not an hour in which she did not hear the lapping of the waves upon the shore and the throb of the open sea beyond. She saw the moon rise. She saw the tremulous quivering of its beams as they shone on the waves. She thought of her past, of the love which for a brief time had flooded her heart with a joy unclouded as sunshine. She remembered all the after-part of that joy,—no detail was forgotten ; and as she remembered, there was no bitterness in her mind, only infinite pity and infinite sorrow, as she thought how the soul of the man she loved went forth,—alone,

—into the darkness, the incomprehensibleness of death. And then,—as you know, women are not logical,—suddenly thought brought into the foreground the good, true heart that loved her now, asking for nothing in return—only pleading for a right to love and shield her. And—“Why not grant his request?” she asked herself. “Why not make him happy?” When morning came, Alice had decided. Yes, she would give all she had; it could not be the bright, beautiful, satisfying love of her youth, but it was all she had, and that was all he asked. It was still early when she opened her window and looked down on the court and narrow strip of lawn that stretched like a carpet between the garden and the Cliff. Mr. Sterling was pacing slowly back and forth; he was waiting as she had bidden, and softly she called, “I am coming!”

For a while after their meeting they were silent, looking toward the wide sea, and then up to the clear sky. Morning surrounded them in all the fresh beauty of its dawning.

And Nature was like a mother that hour, so protective, so tender, so sweet was the air and the silence.

Ralph Sterling has the simplest heart alive, and Alice is no less sincere and earnest ; thus they accepted their new relation to one another quietly and peacefully. When the spring came they were wedded. It was a May morning when we drove to the parish church, surrounded by scenery as sweetly English as that part of the country held. For the first mile or two we kept on the high-road, but then our way led through a lane where the hedgerows were all abloom with fragrant heather, and the bank-sides starred with primroses, cowslips, crimson-tipped daisies, king-cups, and violets. It was nearly noon when we reached the old Gothic church, which was covered by a century's growth of clinging ivy. It was a simple, solemn service, and then we drove home again through the flowery lanes. The next day Alice left us for the rectory located in the very centre of St. Luke's crowded parish.

"Our work is there," she said, for Alice was very truthful. She made no claim to great happiness, but she thought much of work; and she had only promised to give what she could. Had she not said her heart was dead? But was it?—Mr. Sterling's eyes, as Milicent had described them, were deep-set and somewhat sunken, but there was a flash in them as he bade me good-bye that answered "No" to that question.

Meanwhile he waited, and in the stronghold of his heart there was great content.

Ralph Sterling's waiting-time has not been very long, for I wrote that last page in June, and now it is only September, yet yesterday Alice told me her dead heart was alive again, and that she loved her husband with a calm peace, a great trust, and clinging confidence, dearer and more blessed than ever the young joy had been.

XI.

OF all the characters portrayed in this record Frank Howland's is the one that interests me least. And yet I will not pass him by without devoting a few pages to his history, during the years that intervened between his leaving Rome and the present date. And first I must state that Frank's spirit is now, as it was in the days of his young manhood, bounded by a narrow sectarian outlook. Until by his own free will he emancipates himself from this, he will continue to be perplexed by the miserable stumbling-block creeds become, when they are exalted into the place which belongs to faith and love. It is strange how often men like Frank, with intelligent, open minds, on other subjects, will shut the eye of their souls against the truth that there really exists among Christian creeds

very little disagreement regarding the fundamental truths of Christianity. It is also strange how they forget, even where creeds differ most widely, faith is as much one, as love, and there is but one way to love, and one way to have faith. As long, then, as Christ's command is, "*Believe on Me,*" there can be but one way of doing it. Meanwhile the fact that rituals differ need cause no more disturbance in faith, than that languages differ. But enough of this; my object is not theological discussion, but simply to tell you of Frank Howland.

What would I say if my object were theological discussion?—I would remind you that "if it had been told us by what detail of action we were to serve God, if authoritative guidance was so full, that the inward prompting never was required and so never at fault, there then could be no life in ourselves, and though we might obey resolutions, and cherish rules, as a servant obeys orders, we never could become the children of our Father's Spirit." I would remind you also that Top-

lady disagreed with Wesley on many a theological question—but is not the faith that wrote “Rock of Ages,” the same faith as that which finds expression in “Jesus, Lover of my Soul”? I would bid you remember too, “the outward forms of Christianity have no rigid authoritative ritual, but find a vehicle and a passage for its spirit in whatever mode of worship is natural to each nation and each sect. The glory it reveals is only faintly emblemed in the vast Cathedral, and can make the humblest home of Prayer the presence-chamber of the Almighty. Our Lord’s principle holds universally of religious institutions and creeds, that ‘the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.’ And if we live to the Spirit, we are no longer under the Law. Here again Christianity appears in its universal character, saying of every man who has life in himself, ‘Loose him and let him go,’ but compelling no man to walk alone who needs the sympathy and shelter of a church with forms and helps for those who require them, but laying no yoke or burden

upon those who find them impediments, not aids to their inward life. In all such things we must have entire respect for individual liberty, sincerity, and truth; nothing can be more unscriptural, a more direct heresy against Christ, than to estimate the communion of a man's soul with God by his observance of modes, and times of worship that seem natural to us."

This is all a wide wandering from Frank Howland, and as I resume his story, I must preface it by telling you, I made a great mistake in supposing that Madie was dearer to him than an ordinary friend, for whatever of sentiment was awakened in his heart during the days of our touring together, all centred on Alice. It was this emotion which brought him to Cliff House the second summer of our stay there. What passed between him and Alice I do not know in detail, but I do know there was no delay in her enforcement of the fact, that she could never marry him. Frank was too self-satisfied to detect that Alice's refusal had anything personal in it, he merely

thought it was caused by her clinging, in a certain way, to her love for Stephen Forbes, and almost immediately he regained his self-complacency and self-assurance. He was greatly attracted also by Milicent, and I confess, while I am not over-fond of him, he was noble and manly in his intercourse with this gentle English girl, and he had little difficulty in winning her affection, for the very best of him was touched by her; he appreciated her steadfast adherence to principle; he was very tender too, and he would not let her tell him the details of the bitter, dark years of her life. There was nothing to hinder their speedy marriage, and a week after Alice left the Cliff House to assume the duties of a Rector's wife, Frank and Milicent sailed away over the blue waters of the wide Atlantic. And now I think of them as happy in their far Western home; for Milicent parted from us with a smile, though there were tears in her eyes. And I knew, though she had known so much of early sorrow, she had caught at last the first notes of the after-gladness which has al-

ready taught her, "how much the happy days of life outweigh the sorrowful."

There is no doubt she is the very wife to make Frank Howland happy. The fact that she knows little of theology, and a mere nothing of science, while metaphysics is a sealed book to her which she makes no effort to open, adds to her adaptability to Frank's requirements, and truly I believe her gentle spirit will in time lead him to look beyond systems, while her earnest Christian life will be more powerful than argument, and he will pass out of his present narrowness, into the open pasture-land where Christ, and not creed, will illumine his spiritual horizon.

XII.

CLOSE following Alice Fraser's wedding-day I was summoned to Madie Leigh's home. It is a rare old place. The mansion, which is principally of granite, was erected early in the reign of Henry the Seventh; and its external architecture partakes of the mingled character of the old manor house and the feudal castle. The entrance is through a moonstone archway, which leads into a small quadrangular court, adjacent to which, on the north side, is a large square tower, which includes the principal rooms. Access to these rooms is obtained through the hall, which affords unfailing zest for a lover of antiquity. In the windows of painted glass are various emblazonments of the arms of the Campbell family and its alliances. Suits of armor also, both plate and mail, are hung against the wall with arquebuses, halberds, bows and ar-

rows, and swords, while at the south end stands the figure of an ancient warrior armed *cap-à-pie*. Some immense branching stag-horns, elephant's tusks, and an antelope's head are likewise preserved here. The principal apartments on the lower floor are hung with faded tapestry, and the furniture corresponds with the domestic style of the olden times. There are, too, among the antique vestiges, several rudely carved ebony chairs, some immense brass fire-dogs, and numerous drinking-vessels of glass and silver; but the errand that brought me to Campbell Hall dimmed all thoughts of its grandeur. Before I tell you of it I must turn a backward page and record, whatever had been Sir Guy Campbell's disappointment in Madie he bravely concealed. And the old saying, "An Englishman's house is his castle," comprises his heart and its secrets, hence I have no right to invade it. Outwardly his beautiful young wife reigned a queen in society, and however much of the sham of seeming may have been required to make life appear a joy, there was

one happiness that demanded no seeming, and that was love for their child. He was well fitted to fill his parents' hearts with joy and pride; he was the bravest little lad I ever knew. A princely boy, in whom there centred the dignity of by-gone generations of high-born men and women. Little Guy loved his beautiful mother with a devotion only equalled by that he felt for the stern, silent man, his father, who to him was all tenderness. It was Madie's custom to spend the hour between daylight and dark with her child. It was her leisure time, when there was a lull in her pleasure-seeking, too early to dress for dinner and too late for afternoon tea. During those twilight hours Guy's happiness was complete if his mother would sing to him, for music was the delight of his soul. And in song Madie always had a voice sweet and tender, with the sound of a heart-beat in it, and it was never sweeter than when she sang the simple ballads the child loved so well. But alas! the day before I entered that stately home there had come an hour when

little Guy's plea for "one song, just one," was refused, for Madie was too absorbed to even heed her boy. The simple truth was, she had come to a question-place where grave issues were involved, for she had no mind to let her desire for admiration gain proportions which it would be difficult to control, and as she pondered on ways and means by which she could extricate herself from a foolish entanglement, she became, as I said, indifferent to little Guy. And though he was not an impatient, demanding child, he asked over and over again, "Please, mamma, one song, just one." But he asked in vain. The later hours of that day, or rather night, were spent by Madie at a dinner-party, followed by a gay ball, from which she did not return till near morning. Her social success had been brilliant, and though her vivacity had given place to languor as she alighted from her carriage and entered her home, she was still a sparklingly beautiful woman, and her husband, who met her on the landing of the wide stairway, noted it. It was an unusual occurrence

for Sir Guy Campbell to be thus on the watch for his wife's return ; neither was he wont to meet her, as he did then, with a tenderness rarely manifested except in his intercourse with the boy. It startled Madie and wakened a sudden fear.

"What is it?" she asked, in a voice that trembled with nameless dread. Before Sir Guy had time to answer she had darted from him and sped without a pause to the bedside of her child. But she was too late ; the boy's eyes were closed—it was all over.—Never again would she hear the sweet child-voice pleading, "One song, just one, mamma"; never again would she feel the warm clasp of his little arms ; never again would the golden, curly head rest on her shoulder and the little form nestle in her lap ; never again would the dimpled hand smooth her soft cheek in loving caress.—She was too late.—

What caused the sudden death of a lad strong as the boy Guy Campbell?—One of those sudden attacks of croup, that with a child in the full vigor of health often prove fatal in a few hours.

Sir Guy sent for me immediately. Happily I was in England with Alice, staying in Manchester, and by nightfall of the day following the boy's death I was with Madie. But what comfort could I give? As one effort after another failed, I turned to the memories of her youth; surely there I could find something to soothe her passionate grief! I spoke of Bertie, of his guileless life and peaceful departure. I tried to waken her imagination to some thought of his meeting her little lad. But she had filled her soul with earthly imaginations; she had no room left for thoughts of Heaven. I spoke of Christ, the tender Shepherd who carries the lambs in His bosom, but my words held no meaning for her, for Madie had no faith, and she stood in the presence of mortal death with no hope in Immortal Life.—And of all heart-rending anguish, surely such hopelessness is the climax.

It was toward the close of a day of summer sweetness when they carried little Guy's still form from the stately home of his forefathers

to the no less stately tomb in the village churchyard. The sun was setting, not in royal splendor, but in a haze of tender light which bathed the green fields with a soft lustre that whispered of hope and comfort. But no voice of soothing spoke to Madie. It had been long delayed, but she was suffering the penalty of her eager search after the speculative, faith-destroying arguments with which she had striven years before to startle Harry Griffin into admiration of her alert mind. And thus in her hour of need the Truth, that has been a strong refuge for the sorrowful ever since our Lord said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," came to her, empty and cold.

When I left her, two weeks later, there was no lifting of this darkness of unbelief, and no abatement of her passionate grief. Nevertheless before the leaves—that were in full beauty when the boy was taken—had put on the sober tinting of an English autumn, I heard of Madie as seeking forgetfulness by an eager pursuit of the diversions so falsely called

pleasure. I say falsely, for pleasure as God made it, is innocent as the smile of a child, and sweet as the fragrance of a rose, and finds expression in the quickening of the mind for earnest thought and brave deed. This is all unlike the perverted thing men and women call pleasure, in their rush after excitement, and mirth, that echoes to the hollow laughter that strives to banish the recollection of life's blessed purpose. And alas, it was to such diversion Madie turned as she went from one festive scene to the next, with hardly a pause between, and she found each more empty than its forerunner, and more powerless to feed the hunger of her heart.—And yet, she said they helped her to forget.—But did they?

XIII.

IN a fashionable woman's life the months tell much the same story, save for the slight variety different seasons afford for different amusements. Hence time sped on with Madie, marked by nothing that claims especial note, till the early autumn of the year just ended. For it is now three months since the accident of which I will tell occurred. It was self-will and self-pleasing which led to that accident, just as they had led to the eclipse of faith in her soul, and to indifference to the plea of her child, and all the bitter remorse that had followed, when it was too late to grant the little lad's request. But there is no need for me to point the moral of her life,—it is all too evident, and my object is to give you the details of her story. To do this I must picture her in the position and costume in which she appeared to the best advantage. For while she

had not been trained to an English woman's perfect control of "bit and bridle," she was a fearless, graceful rider, and Sir Guy Campbell never beheld her equipped for a canter or gallop, or for following the hounds, without a thrill of pride in her grace and beauty. In fact Madie and her husband were nearer in sympathy at such times than at any other. For she shared his admiration for a fine steed, while she felt almost a friendship for her favorite palfrey, Geraldine, who always seemed conscious of the fair burden she carried. Then too, with the free open sky above, and the sweet country surrounding them, Madie was wont to seem more like the woman Sir Guy had thought her, when he won and wed her for his bride. This was peculiarly so the day I am describing. All the morning they rode side by side over the hills, and across the valleys, and through the woods and shady lanes, and in among the fields yellow with the ripening grain, and then off, and away, over the moorlands, as they followed the lead of the baying hounds.

I am so glad Sir Guy had that bright morning with Madie, she was, too, so peculiarly lovely in appearance that day, and he loved her beauty; I have been told by more than one, that she was like some queen of a fairy realm. The plumed hat she wore was of deep blue, matching her velvet vest, and the flowing skirt of her habit. And so lightly the plumes waved above her golden hair, verily she looked crowned, while the jewelled whip she carried served as sceptre, and the jewelled belt that spanned her slender waist as a girdle. There was a loving softness in her eyes too,—this Sir Guy told me,—that had gone out when her boy died, and not returned till that day; the bloom also, which had faded, flushed her cheeks again, with their aforetime rosy color, that was delicate as the tinting of a sea-shell. She had never lost the pliant grace and easy movement of her early youth, and she held herself with so steady a poise, it was like the rhythmic ring of a song, in its perfect harmony with the motion of the swift-footed steed she rode. And all the morning,

as I said, she kept close to her husband,—all the morning the birds sang, the insects hummed, there was not a cloud in the sky—it was sunshine—all sunshine.—But morning and evening sometimes tell such different stories,—they did that day.

It was a bold, reckless leap to which Madie urged her already restive horse, and yet, she heard her husband's voice of warning, and the cautioning cry of the groom. But Madie was not wont to heed her husband. Why do it now? and what cared she for the groom's caution,—she, who did not know what fear meant?—She was highly excited too, the stir of the hunt, the sound of the hounds, the mingling of many voices, the flash of vivid color, and the crisp breezy air, had all taken possession of her, even as early as when the hunt assembled; and as the day advanced, the thrill of vanity and consciousness of her own beauty and leadership had augmented her excitement. And now, was she to be restrained and held back from final victory, by a swollen

brooklet, that had overflowed the flowery bank? No, no, indeed; and with a gay laugh and merry backward glance toward her husband, "Forward," she urged,—and then the leap,—a sharp cry,—and then,—silence.

Quicker than words can tell, Guy Campbell spurred his panting steed, and followed that fatal plunge. But with the instinct of a trained hunter, the powerful animal he rode knew the spot on that shelving bank where danger lurked, and with safety he took the leap, and found firm footing on the opposite bank. Sir Guy was the first to reach Madie, and he was the one who lifted her prostrate form, and smoothed the golden hair back from the bruised, bleeding forehead,—and then, help came. I cannot tell you the details, it is all too sad.—

Again Sir Guy sent for me to come to Madie, as he had when the boy died. He summoned her father and mother also, and they were with us as quickly as travellers ever crossed the wide ocean.

And now, all that medical skill can do, has been done. Physicians have come from London and Paris,—but it is all of no avail, there is no hiding the truth, Madie's earthly life, whether it be long or short, must always be the life of a helpless invalid. Spring will come with its blossoms and tender showers; summer with its flowers and singing birds; autumn with its ripened fruits and harvest home; winter with its white feathery snow-fall and silvery frosting on twig and grass-blade; but no change of season will bring strength and vigor to Madie.

There were tears in the physician's eyes when he told Sir Guy Campbell this, and yet he was used to suffering—but oh, that blighted life!—oh, the pity of it!—Never to be well again.—

We did not tell Madie, but she knew, and over and over she murmured, “Never—never.”—It was like the cry of a child who refused to be comforted. Even her mother was powerless to soothe her. “Never, never,” it continued her moan by day, and her moan by

night. "Will despair be the end?" Thus Sir Guy Campbell asked on the New-Year morning which dawned yesterday. We were standing outside the heavy curtain of richest damask that hung before the arched doorway that led into Madie's darkened room. She caught no sound of our approaching steps, for every foot-fall was hushed by rugs and soft carpets. Neither could she hear the low voice in which her husband asked that question. But though Madie did not hear us, we heard that incessant moan, "Never, never"—and then we heard a murmur that was not a moan. Sir Guy Campbell is a strong man, but at that sound a sudden trembling shook his powerful frame, he rested his hand on my shoulder for support. I never knew till then how he loved his wife—wilful, wayward, petulant Madie. "Hark," he whispered. Yes, she was speaking, but it was not to her mother, not to the nurse, not to the physician. Could it be that Madie was speaking to God? "Lord, help me."—Surely we heard aright,—and then silence,—and then a great sob, fol-

lowed by the words, "help me to believe."—Silence again—breathlessly we waited. Eagerly we listened for the one Word, without which that plea was wingless; but the silence continued, the seconds counted minutes, only God knew the struggle those minutes held for Madie; only God knew what it cost her self-willed heart to say, "Thy will be done." But she did say it—and then, again a great sob, and the blessed whisper, "for Christ's sake."——At the utterance of that name, Sir Guy Campbell knew, and I knew, Madie's prayer had flown Up, above the mists of unbelief, sorrow, and sin.—Up—even to the Heart of the great Father, who pities like a father, and we knew the Name of her God, that for so many years had been self-will, had vanished before the Christ-taught petition, "Thy will, not mine." And henceforth she would know God by the "Our Father" title.

What the future will bring, how Madie will endure the strain of long years, if tested by their discipline, I cannot tell; but when I

left her yesterday, it was all peace. Her hand, so weak, so white, like a broken lily-bud, was resting in her husband's strong hand-clasp, and her soul was resting in the safe enfolding of the Everlasting Arms.—

And Madie,—as I said the very hour of our meeting long years ago—is a creature who possesses great possibilities for good.—And God loves her—and she has yielded her will to His.—She calls Him Father.—And there have been women powerless to move so much as a limb, who for Christ's sake, and by Christ's help, have accomplished works of mercy, and out of their own weakness and suffering have reached out comfort and strength for others. Yes—sometimes, so infinite is God's tenderness, the pitcher broken at the wheel is the very one He causes to overflow with the sweet waters of healing and the blessed waters of love.

And remember,

“Youth shows but half; trust God; see all, nor be
afraid!

Then, welcome each rebuff

That turns Earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit, nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge
the throe,
For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail."

XIV.

I CAME straight up to London after I left Madie, and here I met Mr. and Mrs. Howland for the first time since Harry and Edith's wedding-day. And yet it needs keener eyes than mine to detect any marked change in their outward appearance. What of the inner life, I wondered?—That Mrs. Howland was unchanged in that, I soon perceived; for she is now, as she was then, a woman of the world. But thank God, Mr. Howland's experience has been rich and full, and as we sat together in the evening, waiting for his wife's return from a dinner-party, he told me how this new blessed life began. Oh, I am so happy, so thankful, he says I helped him to say the "Our Father" prayer. And he dates his first really serious thoughts to the long-ago hour when he asked me the name of my God. That question determined him to seek to discern by

what name he himself knew God—and yet he was slow in coming to the Light, though Bertie Griffin's holy life and peaceful departure did much toward making faith real to him. Mr. Howland's religious experiences belong to a fast passing generation, and where Harry Griffin, according to the trend of this era, encountered speculative difficulties, he had met practical questions. The old-time stumbling-block,—the inconsistencies of professing Christians,—which we of this day push aside by claiming every man has a right to his own opinion, had sorely troubled him. He was perplexed also by the contest between emotional and ethical Christianity. And it had taken him long to discover that “the true spiritual condition of a soul is not to be measured by one man's dependence on his impulses, and another man's dependence on his habitual methods of thought and action, but by the vital question—‘Has the love of God reached the Will and become the Master of action?’” When Mr. Howland touched this heart of Truth, he made no delay in probing

his soul for a reply. But it cost him no slight struggle to answer, for it demanded the yielding of his will to God's will, and quiet as he seemed, self-will was naturally strong in him; but there is no strength of spirit where there is no strength of will, hence the struggle was worth all it cost. Among the many tests of his sincerity was the rising above the narrowness of creed which so controlled his son and daughter. I mean "the habit of judging of the spirit and inward life of a man from the religion he has embraced, and thus allowing creeds to separate, as if the souls of men were of different natures, and one God was not the Father of all Spirits." Mr. Howland had also to wage warfare with a tendency that is wont to try reserved, self-contained people by tempting them to dwell unduly on the state of their own feelings and motives. When he discovered this danger, his self-knowledge became his self-deliverance, and straightway he set himself to learn the alphabet of Christian service, not by pondering self, feelings, and motives, or by systematic instructions, or the study

of the ten Commandments, but by study of the Christ, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

It was this study which had so changed the man who years before had been chiefly absorbed in the accumulation of wealth, for the sake of the honor this world is apt to accord its possessor. It was this study, too, that had led Mr. Howland by the surest, simplest way, to the submission of will which is a man's greatest strength, as well as his greatest victory over self, and which leads on to the "honoring and serving our Father and honoring and serving His children." No wonder when Mr. Howland's spirit has been thus illumined he has not grown old during the years that have intervened between our parting and meeting. You know the promise is, "They who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," they are free to mount on wings, and when the soul is kept young by this Heavenward soaring, gray hairs and a long count of earthly years can no more make a spirit old, than a flurry of November snowflakes can make winter.

XV.

IT was a beautiful afternoon yesterday, when I returned from London, and a wonderful sunset time; lights reached far out over the quiet waters of the Bay, and back into the country, where the frost has wilted the grass and hardened the ground. When I arrived at Cliff House, the sun had just gone down in the west, and that is a glad sight for a woman old as I am to behold, for at my age

“Stepping Westward seems to be
A kind of Heavenly destiny.”

It was time also for the breeze to freshen, and fill the sails of the ships, riding at anchor outside the harbor bar; time for the turning ebb of the tide, and for the snow-white gulls to settle on the gently lapping waves; time for the fisher lads to come home across the sands. But twilight lingers long

here at the North, and between the daylight and the dark, I am wondering what message this record will whisper as you read it. Do you ask, "What would I have it say?" I reply, "That religion is not simply a state of human character; that is morality; it is our whole inward and outward life, as that life is sustained, colored, and inspired by our personal relations with God and Christ. Without that we might have all that Philosophy, all that Morality, all that Knowledge can bestow, and yet we should lose all that depends on Faith, and unless we have Faith, strength will pass away, the rich colors fade out of existence, hope will droop, and life languish, only Faith gives a Heavenly Arm to lean on, and Infinite Life to draw from." Believe, and you will know.

XVI.

I HAVE come now to almost the last leaf of this my after-math journal, but before I close you ask for a page telling of myself.

What! would you have the story of a middle-aged woman? No, no; life is too full, stories are too many for such a tale. Enough for you to know is, that I am still with Lady Ann; I call the Cliff House home. As for my past it is as dear as ever, but I learned long ago that it is by present service, and not by memories of the past, that I am bidden to follow Christ. Meanwhile at morning, noon, and night I say to myself,

“To meet worth living for;
Worth dying for to meet;
To meet worth parting for,
Bitter forgot in sweet;
To meet, worth parting before
Never to part more.”

And so I wait till God calls; I have plenty of

work. This sea-coast town is like a nest, built between two cliffs, that shut in a dangerous Bay. There is never a spring and never an autumn without storms, after which hearts need comforting, bodies need helping. The fisher-folk are poor. But as you say, this is an out-of-the-way corner of the world, and I seem pushed aside. And yet I would not if I could choose the time or place touched by my life. And however limited its seeming sphere, the rippling circle of influence can spread far; the links that bind souls are subtle and fine. Yes, I am content with God's ordering, for

“All life is good
When the one blessed lesson is understood,
Of its most sacred brotherhood.”

And I am satisfied

“So might I toiling morn to eve
Some purpose in my life fulfill,
And ere I pass some work achieve
To live and move when I am still.

“I ask not with that work combined
My name should down the ages move,
But that my toil such end may find
As man may bless and God approve.”

BOOKS BY ROSE PORTER.

There are few more admirable stories of their kind than those written by MISS PORTER.—*New York Times*.

SUMMER DRIFTWOOD for the WINTER FIRE. 12mo. Cloth, . . . \$1 00

A tale of girlish experiences during a summer of travel, in which the writer has delicately woven through the whole a story of love gradually developed. . . . No purer, sweeter, better volume in its way.—*New York Times*.

Miss Porter's stories are neat, unpretentious, and healthful. Without complicated plot or stirring scene, they please the fancy and enchain the interest by their beautiful simplicity and touching sweetness. The characters are winsome, and we follow their lives with a real regard for them.—*Albany Evening Journal*.

WINTER FIRE (THE). A Sequel to "Summer Driftwood." 12mo. Cloth, . . . 1 95

Those who have read "Summer Driftwood" will need no recommendation to read the Sequel.—*Christian World*.

FOUNDATIONS; or, Castles in the Air. 12mo. Cloth, . . . 1 00

A story that has power—not as a whirlwind, or a thunderbolt, but as a quiet summer day, whose very stillness is its power.—*Harper's Magazine*.

UPLANDS AND LOWLANDS; or, Three Chapters in a Life. 12mo. Cloth, . . . 1 25

The story of the life of a young artist, which leaves the impression upon the reader that it is a chapter borrowed from real experience.

BOOKS BY ROSE PORTER.

YEARS THAT ARE TOLD (THE). 12mo.
Cloth, ... \$1 25

The story of a woman's life drawn through a long earthly pilgrimage, during which she filled with rare success the crowning missions of a true woman's life as daughter, wife, and mother—a beautiful life-picture.—*N. Y. Observer.*

A SONG AND A SIGH. 12mo. Cloth, 1 25

This winning story of a young girl's and a young wife's life could not lack in the peculiar charm which invests this author's writings.—*New Bedford Standard.*

Full of sweet suggestions, exquisite description, and tender thought.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

Lit up with the glory of some of the commoner experiences of life.—*Congregationalist.*

IN THE MIST. 12mo. Cloth, . . . 1 25

A study of a woman's life, a sort of prose poem, whose poetry is unmistakably fine in its tenderness and its capacity to utter things that are unutterable except in true poetry. It is a charming piece of work, in whatever way we may look at it. For elevation of sentiment and purity of purpose, the little book has no superior among works of its class.—*The Evening Post, N. Y.*

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,

38 West Twenty-third St., New York.

Either or all of these sent by mail to any part of the United States, post-paid, on receipt of the price by the publishers.

The set of six volumes, in case, in uniform binding, Price, \$8.25. Fractional amounts can be remitted in postage-stamps.

STEPPING-STONES: A Story of our Inner Life. By Sarah Doudney. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

A love story so pleasantly told, and ends so happily, that the reader will feel amply repaid.—THE INTERIOR.

Tranquil, sunny, and healthful.—BOSTON JOURNAL.

THE OTHER HOUSE: A Story. By Mrs. M. R. Higham, author of "Cloverly." 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

Whoever wants a quiet and healthful story, pervaded by a sincere and noble purpose, well constructed and well written, can scarcely do better than to read THE OTHER HOUSE.—BOSTON JOURNAL.

An American story, written much in the vein of the stories of English home life by Miss Yonge.—CHRISTIAN UNION.

BESSIE HARRINGTON'S VENTURE. By Julia A. Mathews. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

Full of genial human nature, tempered and guided by the loftiest emotions.—INTER-OCEAN, CHICAGO.

The hero is a genuine hero, worth knowing.—CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.

DAVID FLEMING'S FORGIVENESS. By Margaret M. Robertson, author of "Janet's Love and Service." 12mo. Cloth. Price, \$1.00.

A story founded upon the lives of some New England families who were pioneers upon Canadian soil. The book dwells upon the customs and courtesies of the time, and the author weaves a beautiful story out of the lives which it introduces to the reader. . . . The book is admirable; its language elegant and expressive.—THE INTER-OCEAN, CHICAGO.

Either or all of the above sent by mail, post-paid, on receipt of the price. Fractional amounts can be remitted in postage-stamps.

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,

38 West Twenty-third Street, N. Y.

May be obtained of the booksellers.

AVIS BENSON ; or, Mine and Thine : with other Sketches. By Mrs. E. Prentiss, author of "Stepping Heavenward," etc. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

"Incidents of common life wrought up into a series of interesting sketches, bearing the seal of good taste, inventive fancy, and rare practical wisdom. The author has evinced a remarkable aptitude for effective narrative, a peculiar power of drawing a salutary moral from events in the usual domestic routine, and a delicate choice of language, equally refined and simple, leaving a beautiful memorial of high literary culture and admirable mental habits, as well as of pure and noble moral aims."—*New York Tribune*.

THE OSEGO CHRONICLES ; or, the Kuylers and their Friends. By Mary B. Sleight, author of "Prairie Days," etc. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

"A charming picture of home-life in the country."—*National Baptist*.

"Perfectly wholesome, yet absorbingly interesting story. We know of nothing better in this branch of literature than this book, nothing more interesting or more profitable."—*New York Evening Post*.

WILFRED : A Story with a Happy Ending.

By A. T. Winthrop. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

"A charming story which can not fail to interest young people, and will certainly profit them."—*Methodist*.

"Pure and healthful in tone and with a management of incidents that is pretty sure to hold the interest."—*Golden Rule*.

"Skillfully constructed, gracefully told."—*Christian Intelligencer*.

"A simple, delightful, carefully-written story."—*Chicago Tribune*.

MY FATHER AND I : and Helva's Child. By

Katharine M. March. One volume. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.00.

"These are sweet and pleasing stories, the first being sort of a prose idyl, while the other is a pretty Norse romance, and both are excellent."—*New York Evening Post*.

"Great merit in style, power to interest, and excellent moral lesson inculcated in each story."—*Advocate & Guardian*.

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & CO.,

38 West Twenty-third St., N. Y.

Either or all of the above will be sent by mail, post-paid by the publishers, or may be obtained of the booksellers.

THEODORA: A HOME STORY.

BY

PHEBE F. McKEEN.

12mo, CLOTH, - - - - - \$1.00.

"A home story. Simple, plain, and natural; beginning with the children in their school-days and tracing their growth of character until they become men and women. Theodora, the heroine, a bright and somewhat wilful girl, becomes a strong, earnest woman, and exhibits nerve and endurance in trying situations."—*Christian at Work*.

"A very pleasant, pure, and simple story of American home-life, with enough plot and dramatic power to make it absorbing reading."—*Church Journal*.

"The author is a vigorous writer, and the book abounds in bright thoughts pithily expressed."—*The Advance*.

"This well-written story of domestic life might be taken as a text-book for the rising generation, and even those who do not agree with its opinions will find the teaching so excellent, the style so good, and the interest so well and so naturally sustained, that they will not regret the time spent in reading it."—*N. Y. World*.

"The gradual development of this story illustrates quite forcibly and beautifully the superior worth and power of Christian principle, and the whole tone of the book is unusually good and pure."—*The Churchman*.

"May be read with interest and genuine profit."—*Congregationalist*.

"A healthy influence, full of the kindly and sanctifying influences of home, breathes through every page. The work is excellent in tone and style, and presents a picture of life that stirs the feelings and awakens deep sympathy."—*Daily Chronicle* (English).

"It is a sweet, good story, and very finely written."—*Providence Press*.

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & CO.,

38 West Twenty-third St., N. Y.

* * Sent by mail, prepaid, on receipt of the price. Fractional amount may be remitted in postage-stamps

THORNTON HALL;

OR,

OLD QUESTIONS IN YOUNG LIVES.

BY
PHEBE F. McKEEN.

12mo, CLOTH, - - - - - \$1.00.

"A series of sketches of life in a girls' boarding-school, caught together by a unity of characters. It is not so much for the literary merit that we praise the book—though that is not despicable—as it is for the thorough good feeling and kindly sense which pervade all. It is written by one who understands girl nature—that everlasting puzzle to the great part of the world. She is in sympathy with all the life and fun and love of young womanhood, but she also understands its dangers, and sees that there is something better than the fun and the show after all."
—*New Haven Palladium*.

"The most graphic and telling picture of school-girl life we have ever read, and one of the sweetest and best stories of its class ever written."—*Literary World*.

"The spirit of the book is gentle, without being weak, and serious, without being dull. An earnest Christian faith is everywhere manifest in the work. We trust that it will be read widely, and will find its way into the hands of many, for it is full of counsel, and this counsel is not the less valuable because it is given by example and not by direct precept."—*Church and State*.

"It is an unpretentious and charming story, full of grace and simplicity."—*Albany Evening Journal*.

"Sparkling, natural, and bright."—*Troy Times*.

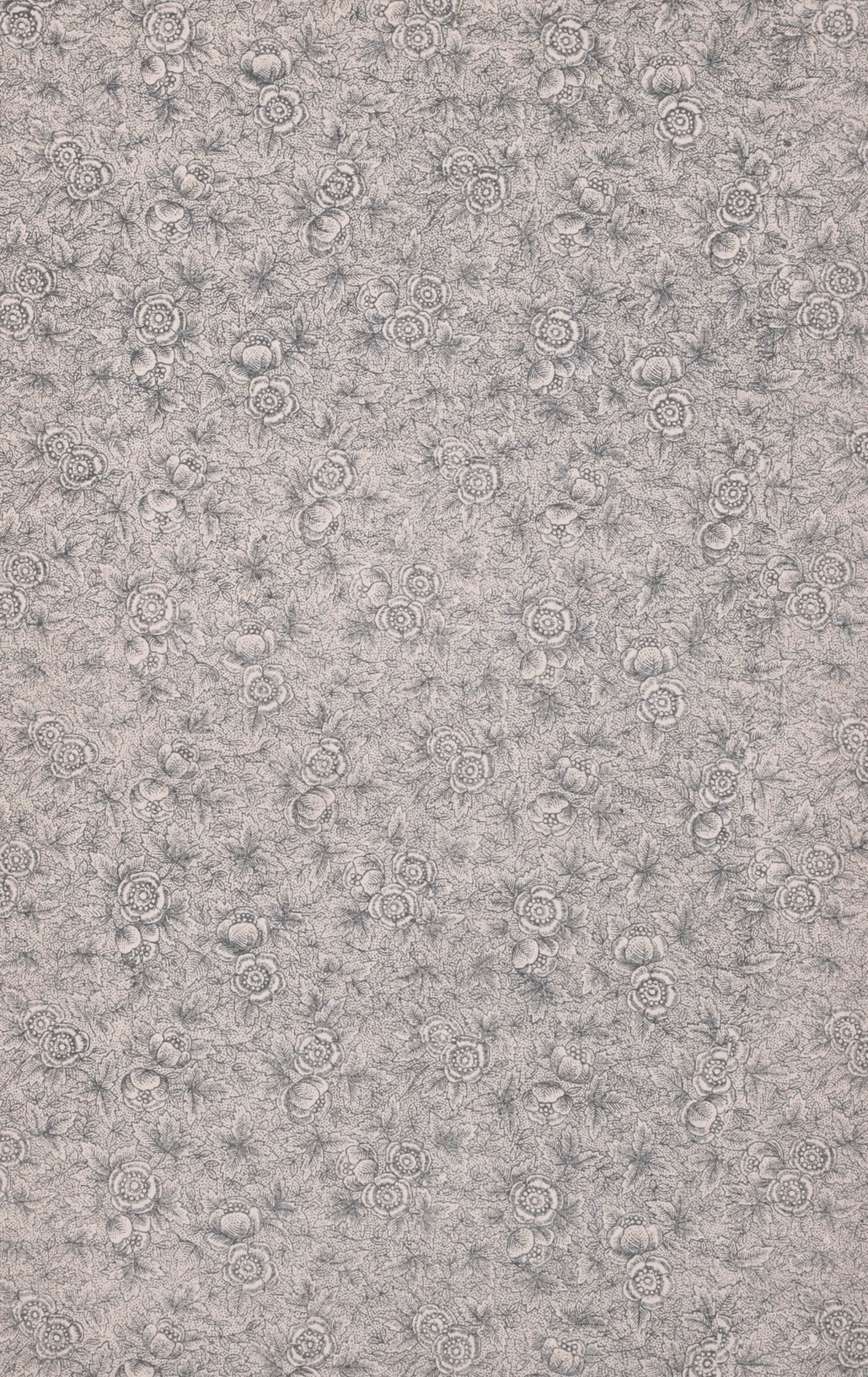
"School-girl life has seldom been more cleverly and attractively presented than in this volume. The spirit of the book is earnest and thoughtful, but this in nowise prevents it from being highly entertaining. The book is natural and true, and full of genuine Christian feeling."—*Albion* (N. Y.)

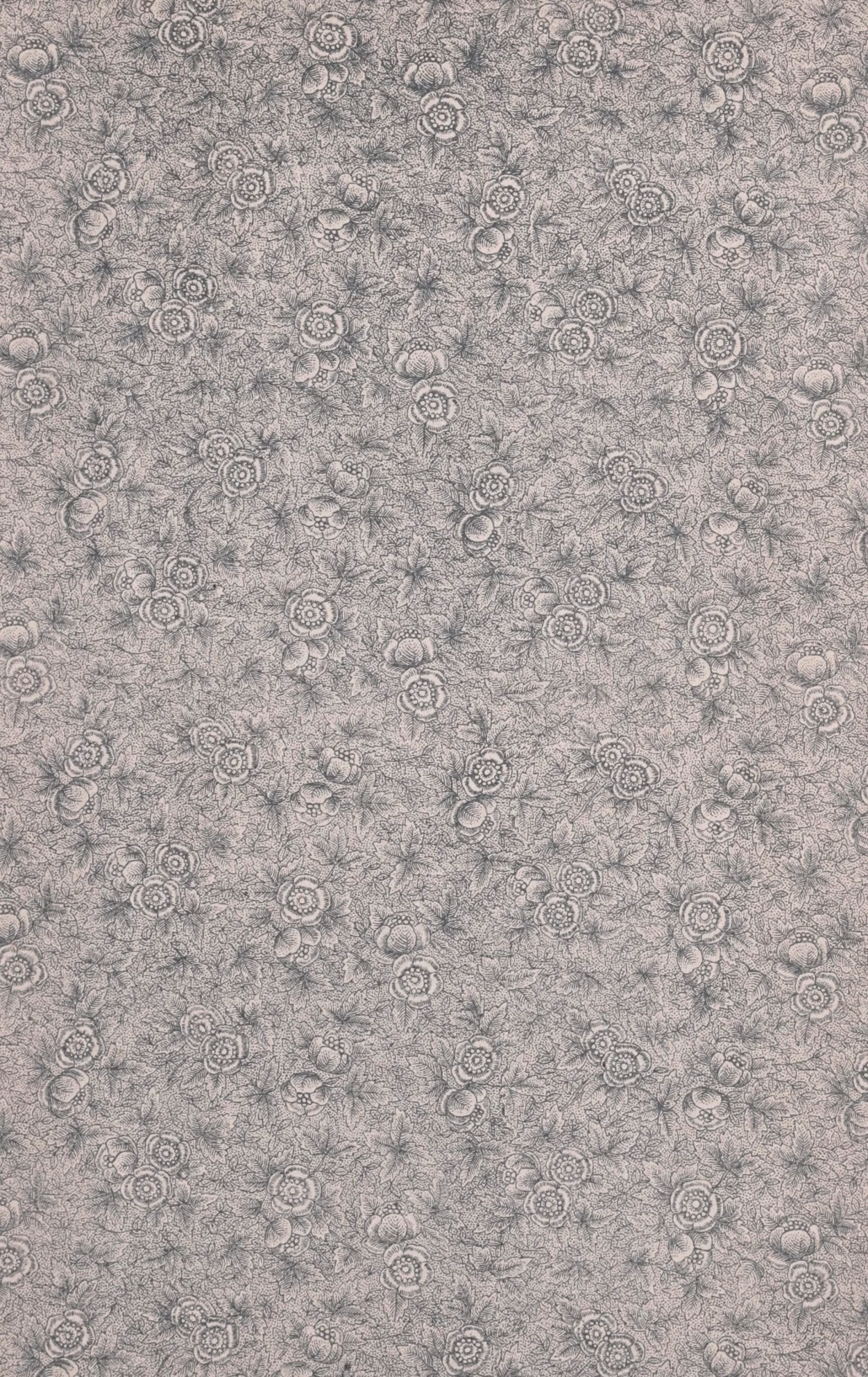
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & CO.,

38 West Twenty-third Street, New York.

* * Sent by mail, prepaid, on receipt of the price. Fractional amount may be remitted in postage-stamps.

p23





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00022859481